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CHILDE ALARIQUE,

A

POET'S REVERIE.

WITH

OTHER POEMS.

We poets in our youth begin in gladness,
But thereof comes in the end Despondency and Madness.

WORDSWORTH.

'Tis not, as heads that never ache suppose,
Forgery of fancy and a dream of woes.
Mania a harp, whose chords elude the sight,
Each tuned to harmony disposed aright;
The screws reversed, a task which, if he please,
God, in a moment, executes with ease,
Ten thousand thousand strings at once go loose,
Lost, till he tune them, all their power and use.

COWPER.

THE SECOND EDITION,

CORRECTED AND ENLARGED.

EDINBURGH:

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CHILDE ALARIQUE.

PART FIRST.

1.

" Ye forests wide, from whom I feel the breath
Of spring, that bears ten thousand odours, blow!
Ye mountains, gay with purple blooming heath,
Once more your scenery vanquishes my woe!
Once more I feel poetic ardours glow!—
Through shadowy groves of never-fading pine,
I watch the crystal currents glittering flow;—
Nor fairer rays within those waters shine,
Than bright responsive gleams of rapture that are mine!

2.

" O fool to think, that never, never more
For me the pulse of joy would throb again,
While yet far distant from the peaceful shore
I combated the waves and wintry rain,
And my frail bark was beaten back amain
To the wild sea where ceaseless tempests blew!
But now, fast moor'd, I smile at former pain;
Soft are the gales, the skies of lovely hue,
And all my infant raptures swell my heart anew.

3.

" Oh, Heaven! what ecstacy to weave again
The purple heath-bell into garlands wild!
To meet in haunted glades the dryad train,
And tread the path I loved while yet a child!

No more from these calm solitudes exiled,
Struggling I'll join Ambition's venal crew;
But here, mid mountain steeps and woodlands wild,
The path of joy and ecstacy pursue,
And the sweet Muse that loves the mountain forest woo!"

4.

Thus, as the well-known landscape open'd wide
Its varied treasures to his raptured sight,
With vernal hues and white haze beautified,[2]
And tinted here and there with radiance bright,
Childe Alarique 'gan utter his delight[3]
To the rude cliffs, beneath whose rocky steep,
In early days, full many a summer night
'Twas his in transport all dissolved to weep,
What time the fairy train their mystic revels keep.

5.

Oh, who can tell the varied joys that wait
The young enthusiast in the lonely shade,
When, all entranced, he goes to meditate
On Nature, in her richest charms array'd!
What artist e'er the magic hues pourtray'd
That float on hill and dale!—Ah, happy he,
If joys like these had not been doom'd to fade,
Like leaves in Autumn withering on the tree,
And yield to pale decay and ceaseless misery!

6.

Go then, unapprehensive Youth! explore
Whate'er of rapture woodland scenes can yield!
On dauntless pinion let thy fancy soar,
And thousand airy structures busy build!

Be all of Nature's richest stores reveal'd
In sweet succession to thy watchful eye,
While yet the hues of glory light the field,
And yet is heard celestial harmony
From every copsewood grey and haunted steep on high!

7.

See now, the Childe to coverts green repair
In the fair, blushing, dewy morn of May;
What bliss in every breath of "common air!"[4]
What transport in the blackbird's choral lay!
What grandeur in the landscape's fair array!—
But, ah! what mortal strain his thoughts can tell,
What pencil could the melting forms pourtray,
That on his ravish'd sight inviting swell!—
Oh, dreams beloved! whilom I knew your influence well!

8.

But now, alas! my feeble mind no more
Is borne aloft on Fancy's azure wing;
Those dreams have died, like ice-built temples hoar,
That fade before the first warm breath of spring;
Or like the wreck of dry leaves rustleïng,
That choak the pathway in November chill.
Childe Alarique! thy songs of gladness sing;
For thee they blossom yet on dale and hill;
Pursue thy woodland path; of joyaunce take thy fill!

9.

Behold the Youth that late we left at morn,
Now eager watching the mild rays of even;
While the loved woodlark from his flowery thorn
Carols a vesper hymn of praise to Heaven;

And in the breeze ten thousand odours driven,
Bathe the Childe's forehead in ambrosial dew!
What visions to his raptured sight are given!
What shapes are glittering the copsewood through,
What-while fair twilight sheds her own enchanting hue!

10.

What transport then on the cold reeds to lie,
That fringe, romantic Teith! thy crystal tide,
And watch the wild tints of the evening sky
That linger on the mountain's rocky side,
Where the red heath-flowers double red are dyed!
To mark the mystic trains that round him rise,
And, beckoning, through the tangled forest glide!
To "hear the inexpressive harmonies,
That seem to float on earth, and warble through the skies."*

* These two lines are from "Psyche," by Mrs Tighe.

11.

Then, too, the Childe unrolls the magic store
Of old romance; unlocks the enchanted spring
Whence Milton drew his choicest draughts of yore;
And now Imagination dares to bring
The forms of bleeding chief and scepter'd king,
That on the self-same plains had fought and died,
Where now he burns to wake the trembling string,
And feels his heart dilate with conscious pride,
That to those dauntless chiefs his spirit is allied.

12.

Pass we awhile the summer hours unsung,
And now the tranquil charms of autumn view!
Behold the Childe in some rude cavern flung,
Weaving the heath-bell into garlands new;

While the wide lake unfolds its waters blue,
Slumbering beneath the sun's attemper'd ray;
And all is silent, save the plaintive coo
Of the lorn dove, or, screaming for his prey,
The falcon's voice remote, from lonely summit grey.[6]

13.

Or meet him wandering through thy rocky vale,
Glenfinlas, where, by watchful shepherds seen,
Ghosts of the mighty dead are known to sail,
And marshal shadowy troops upon the green:
See him, enraptured with the lovely scene,
By lone Moneira's current bend his way,
Till pensive Evening sheds her light serene;
And now, to watch the tints of dying day,
Reclined upon the heath, his listless length he lay.

14

Intent he gazes on the roseate dye
That lingering decks the chambers of the west;
While not a voice disturbs the harmony—
The blissful calm that reigns within his breast.
How still the woods! All, all is hush'd to rest:
You hear the dry leaf parting from the tree.
But, lo! what new enchantments are confest!
Why rolls his eye in kindling ecstacy?
Why starts the Childe, amazed, from his tranquillity?

15.

Is it the star of even that quits her sphere,
Descending to the darkling realms below?—
Behold on earth an angel form appear!—
Art thou the messenger of joy or woe?—

Celestial glories round the seraph glow
But now her heavenly features are reveal'd—
Joy, joy alone from thy regards can flow,
Inhabitant of yon cerulean field!—
Lowly the wondering Youth in adoration kneel'd.'

16.

Cheering with smiles ineffably serene,
Childe Alarique that angel form drew near:
Now on her arm an airy harp was seen,
And now her voice most ravishingly clear,
Now that enchanted harp salutes his ear!—
Deep in his bosom thrills the magic lay,
And kindling rapture vanquishes his fear,
When soft he hears that heavenly Minstrel say,
" Behold thy Guardian Power, and her behest obey

17.

" Take this enchanted harp, and swear to keep
Inviolate the laws which I impose:
Swear never more to tempt the raging deep,
By low ambition plunged in fruitless woes,
And I will shew thee whence true rapture flows!
I'll build thee palaces in woodlands wild!
Thou know'st the fragrance of the wild-briar rose;
Thou lovest the reign of summer evening mild;
And thou shalt live as best befits the Muse's child."

18.

Pass we unsung the wintry hours, and now
Behold the Childe in yon sequester'd glade:
Fresh leaves are bursting forth on every bough;
The scenes in morning brilliance are array'd;

Even the dark ravine, and the cliff display'd,
Where gleams the orient sun on Ben Venue;
The woodlark carols clear in flowery shade;
The blue lake glances fair the copsewood through,
And all is bright again and Paradise to view.

19.

Behold him listening to the legends hoar
Some venerable seer or shepherd tells;
While, seated on Loch Katrine's wooded shore,
The landscape's fair expanse before him swells;
Or in the rocky mountain's mystic dells,
Where Superstition holds her ancient reign,
And many a dreaded ghost and ourisk dwells,
Delighted watch the visionary train
Of images that float on his creative brain.

20.

Or meet him when at eve the vapours pale
Float on the forest, and the verdant spray
Of weeping birch perfumes the southern gale;—
Behold him leave the banks of Loch Achray,
And through the rocky forest bend his way,
A wilderness of sweets beyond compare,
Till, gleaming wildly in the purple ray,
Loch Katrine opens wide her scenery fair!
Oh for an angel's voice his transport to declare!

21.

Not always in the wilderness astray,
Where late we left the visionary Childe,
Did Alarique devote the summer day
To faëry dreams of superstition wild;

Ofttimes his fleeting moments were beguiled
In lowland vales, where peaceful hamlets smoke,
And where the mouldering towers sublimely piled
Of fortress old o'erhang the wooded rock,—
There oft the raptured Youth poetic strains awoke.

22.

Oh, how enchanting, when the western gale
Unlocks the fragrant bud of verdant hue,
Again to wander through the steaming vale,
And hear the thrush his vernal song renew!
To breathe ten thousand odours wafted through
The copse, where mingling birch and hazel twine,
And roam in thought the heaven's unclouded blue,
While "without effort flows the impassion'd"* line;
Oh days of fleeting bliss and ecstacy divine!

* "And without effort flows the impassion'd strain."—*Brydges.*

23.

But not in verse alone Childe Alarique
Fix'd the wild forms of his creative brain:
In painting's glowing art he knew to seek
Sweet solace, when the visionary train
Of shapes came wildering on his sight amain
And when the magic tints of vernal light
Gleam'd with enchanting splendour on the plain,
He knew to arrest the lovely scenes aright,
And all their charms pourtray in kindred colours bright.

24.

And oh, how soothing at the close of day,
When Twilight's magic tints adorn the wood,
To explore some venerable ruin grey,
To him, I ween, no lonesome solitude;

For there the peerless maid of melting mood
Meets her fond lover, blushing like the morn;
And champions fierce renew their ancient feud,
And wake on either side the signal horn,
By Fancy's power recalled from charnel-house forlorn.

25.

But not by Fancy's power alone was given
To people that old tower with maidens gay,
And knights and squires; but duly when at even
Fair Twilight 'gan unfold her amber ray,
His guardian Genius thither bent her way.—
Oh, she was fairer far than mortal maid!
What artist might her lovely form pourtray,
When floating through the forest's dusky shade,
The radiance wild of evening on her features play'd!

26.

Her voice was sweeter than the blackbird's lay;
With her the Childe explored the fragrant bowers;
No more in solitude he passed the day—
To her he gave both morn and evening hours.
With her he wove fresh wreaths of early flowers;
With her he listened to the cheering song,
Which on the ear of night the skylark pours,
And heard the drowsy beetle borne along;
Sweet soothing sounds, I ween, unknown to city throng!

27.

But, think not these were all the joys they knew!
They twain did revel in the Naiads' court;
And they did frolic with the Fairies too,
Which to the moonlight forest made resort.

Ah joys too little prized, of date how short!
How soon your phantoms faded from the view!
One fleeting summer passed in careless sport,
A gathering tempest o'er the woodlands threw
Its everlasting clouds of melancholy hue.

END OF PART FIRST.

CHILDE ALARIQUE.

PART SECOND.

Then whilst his throbbing veins beat high
With every impulse of delight,
Dash from his lips the cup of joy,
And shroud the scene in shades of night.

And let Despair with wizard light
Disclose the yawning gulph below,
And pour incessant on his sight
Her spectred ills and shapes of woe.

'Tis done, the powerful charm succeeds;
His high reluctant spirit bends;
In bitterness of soul he bleeds,
Nor longer with his fate contends.

ROSCOE.

CHILDE ALARIQUE.

PART SECOND.

1.

Ah, me! is this the Childe that wont to view
The simplest scene with kindling ecstacy?
Ah, me! his hollow cheek how pale of hue!
How faded now the lustre of his eye!
Joyless he roams the mountain scenery,
Or feebly drags his fainting steps along;
"He passes all he sees unheeded by:"*
In vain for him the woodlark's cheering song,
And all the charms that reign the vernal woods among!

* Cowper.

2.

Ah, me! what grief to meet the western gale,
Yet feel within no joys responsive rise!
To tread again the flower-bespangled vale,
The path that woke our infant ecstacies,
In years when every hour unheeded flies!
To twine once more the vernal garland gay,
Yet feel that nought can sooth our agonies;
That all our cherished dreams have fled away,
For ever fled—nor aught can renovate their sway

3.

Yet now, when brightly gleams the noonday sun,
And opes the landscape wide its fair array,—
Will no faint trace of former joys be won?
Nor when the southern breezes softly play,

Wafting the sweets of many a blossom'd spray
Nor when the skylark warbles loud and clear
Nor when through favourite scenes he bends his way,
Where Fancy's brightest visions did appear?
No! all to him is cold and desolate and drear.

4.

" And have they died, and never, never more
To wake again, those visionary hues,
That wont to charm my woodland path of yore,
And on each mountain scene their light diffuse?
Hast thou departed too, celestial Muse!
No more to cheer thy votary's lonely way?
Ah, me! what soul-appalling gloom ensues,
When thou withdraw'st thine animating sway?
What reckless fiends e'en now are watching for their prey!

5.

" Oh Heaven! it is the blessed breath of spring!
The groves again their green attire assume;
It is the blackbird loudly carolling;
These are my favourite flowers that round me bloom:—
Oh what shall cure this everlasting gloom?
What charm shall still the voice that seems to cry,
' Go to the charnel vault—the rayless tomb—
Here is no path in our sweet scenery
For thee, detested child of guilt and misery!'

6.

" Is this the radiant path I trod of yore?
Green grows the grass—the skylark soars on high!
Lo! yonder is the castled summit hoar,
Beneath whose cliff I watch'd the evening sky.

Oh, God! the sunbeam sheds its brilliancy
On that surpassing scene! but, ah! for me
What scene shall wake responsive ecstacy?
Where is mine innocence? mine inward glee?
Oh, days of early bliss, how soon your transports flee!"

7.

Thus mourn'd the Childe with many a tear and sigh,
As on the grass his listless length he threw;
Where on his head the fragrant canopy
Of blossom'd wild-wood shed ambrosial dew.
In vain for him the ringdove's plaintive coo,
Or cuckoo's mirthful note is heard around;
No charms his wonted raptures could renew,
Or quell the fiend Remorse, that grimly frown'd,
And still with blood-stain'd fangs infix'd the deadly wound.

8.

In luckless hour did Braggadochio vilde[1]
His pastime in that wilderness pursue;
In luckless hour he met the happy Childe
Wandering as wont the mountain forest through.
In luckless hour, alas! the Childe he drew,
Reckless of his allegiance, from the shade
Where all his hours on wings of transport flew,
And straight to his accursed haunts convey'd,
Where Bacchanalian Rout and rude Disorder sway'd.

9.

'Twas on the chillest eve of chilling March,
And "hoarse and high" the northern breezes blew
Through the dry branches of the leafless larch,
When echoing notes were heard the forest through,

Of hound and horse and horn! a jovial crew
With laugh and shout approached the quiet bower,
Where, rapt in visions of celestial hue,
Childe Alarique was laid that luckless hour.
Ah! where wert thou, sweet Muse, the poet's guardian power!

10.

With song and laughter rude the Sorcerer vilde,
And robed in scarlet mantle rich and gay,
Entered the portal of that mansion wild,
And straight in accents bland began to say,
How he and all his train had lost their way,
And came for shelter from the winds of night—
The luckless youth could not him answer nay,
But proffered food and rest; and, stirring bright
The faggots on the hearth, awoke a cheering light.

11.

Long time elapsed not ere his dangerous guest
Enquired, in well-feigned accents of surprise,
Why such a youth, with health and genius blest,
Wasted his days so far from courtly joys?
Replied the Childe, " To me this bower supplies
More charms than all the world besides could shew;
Nor would I change these lonely ecstacies,
For aught that courts and cities could bestow—
Too well the grief that clouds their pageantry I know."

12.

Right artfully replied, with courage new,
The Sorcerer vile—" O shame, O sophistry!
Deem'st thou that man no duties has to do,
But such as in those narrow limits lie—

No joys to taste—to win no dignity?

Shame on such coward creed! Be thine to dwell

Where Virtue tried proves best her purity,

And Fame's inspiring trump has space to swell—

To souls inglorious leave the rude inglorious cell."

13.

'Twere long those artful speeches to recite,

Deep-fraught with sophisms false in lengthened chain;

By which, at length, in Solitude's despite,

The Youth he won to join his wicked train;

And, once more combating the restless main,

To search for Joy, where Joy was never found,—

For Virtue, where unbounded Vice did reign,—

For Love and Sympathy, where all around,

Dead to each purer charm, in base delights were drown'd.

14

An " innocent crime" it was ; for magic art
Its blackness all in duty's veil array'd ;—
But did no secret pangs invade his heart,
And did he quit with joy the peaceful shade?
Oh, no ! the sigh, the starting tear, betrayed
The wasting throes of inward misery,
To leave the groves where, with the heavenly Maid,
'Twas his whilom the wild-flower wreath to tie,
And all his hours had fled on wings of ecstacy.

15.

Behold him now the sport of seas and wind,
On the wide waves of ocean tossed again,
All happiness, all virtue, left behind :
Nursing a brood of fancies wild and vain !

Loud sings the gale, the ship was tossed amain;
And many an hour of toil and fear had they,
Ere that unlucky bark a port could gain
Of the proud city, where, in rich array,
Sojourned the unholy peers of Braggadochio gay.

16.

Proud were that city's towers; they rose on high,
Founded on rock sublime; and all around
Were magic scenes of wild variety,
And seem'd, at distance, all was fairy-ground,
And Hope high raptures in the prospect found.
But when the voyagers, landed, did explore
The dusky streets and lanes that there abound;
Or mingled with the crowd that thronged the shore—
Oh, Christ! their fairy dreams for ever all were o'er.

17.

It was, the sooth to say, a lovely place,
That Nature had created passing fair;
But it was peopled by a numerous race
That cared not what aspect the scenes did wear;
Nor aught admired of beautiful or rare.
Sunk were they all in apathy profound,
And nought but sensual joys their hearts could share!
The *mind* was wanting on that lovely ground,
To cast its own celestial light on all around.

18.

As onward mid the crowded scenes they hie,
Each countenance the Childe did read in vain
To find a trace of sensibility—
All, all were furrow'd by base passion's reign,

Or puffed and bloated by the pride of gain.
And in each glittering female, vainly, too,
He sought for charms that might the heart enchain,
Such as, of yore, amid the groves he knew,
Far, far remote, that now he never more might view.

19.

To him whose purer senses from the gale
Of springtide could unmingled rapture gain;
O weary, flat, unprofitable, stale
Were the coarse joys that grovelling minds enchain!—
Though never yet did Vice his ear obtain,
But loathsome still appeared with all her wiles,
Yet, mingling with each base ignoble train,
Contagion dire his purity defiles,
And all his wonted gleams of ecstacy exiles.

20.

Rescued from that accursed society,
And to the peaceful groves restored again,
Behold the Childe in vain each fountain try
To purify of sin the lurking stain!
His days are spent in solitude and pain.
To the free mind of Innocence alone,
Pure as the breeze that sweeps the vernal plain,
Are the true pleasures of the wild-wood known,
And the bright forms that play round Fancy's radiant throne.

21.

If chance, with trembling hand he touched the lyre
That on the wild birch-bough suspended hung,
With feeble hope to wake the wonted fire,
What words can paint the grief his heart that stung,

To hear the altered notes that feebly rung!

Such notes, I ween, as those that now I raise,

Whose Doric lyre whilom loud accents flung;—

But now for ever hushed its ardent lays!

For ever crushed and dead Hope's once resplendent blaze!

22.

As when a grove of reverend trees in spring,

Smiling in all their luxury and pride,

And to the motion of the zephyr's wing

Casting their fragrance far on every side,

By the fell axe are laid in ruin wide,—

Most desolate and mournful to the sight

Is the sad scene! So, in that ruined mind

All chill and blank became, and void of light,—

That erst was filled with rays of genius passing bright.

23.

Morn after morn dawned on the wretched Childe,
The clouds rode gaily, and the breezes blew—
Morn after morn, amid the woodlands wild,
He heard the bittern boom—the ringdove coo:—
The falcon screamed; the cock full loudly crew—
The scenes in brightest brilliance were arrayed—
But from their charms the Childe no gladness drew—
All seemed to him involved in blackest shade—
"His" own dark cheerless "mind his own" dark "dungeon" made.

24.

Past were the Spring's sweet reign; the Summer's pride,
And Autumn's days serene; November chill,
With darkening clouds, covered the mountain side,
Casting her influence drear on dale and hill—

Dense wreaths of frost-fog 'gan each vale to fill,
And the scar leaves were torn by every wind,—
Then first the Childe confessed a rising thrill
Of sympathy that soothed his troubled mind;
And in the desolate scene sweet solace could he find.

25.

Midnight; and on the woods most heavily
Slept the dull clouds; the southern breezes blew,
And sung aloud their mournful minstrelsy;—
Seemed as a voice echoed the forest through,
That called the Childe to some aventure new!
Forth rushed he then on the wide heath alone;
Where nought was heard—nor aught was there to view:
No murmur save the tempest's angry tone,
The river's distant roar, the mountain cataract's moan.

26.

Anon, a form seemed into life to spring,
Most like a darker cloud—Night's dusky reign
Usurping,—as it moved on shadowy wing,
(Floating with fearful influence o'er the plain)
And now beside the Youth a place did gain!
Most horrible it was: yet, strange to tell,
The Youth was drawn amid that spectre's train,
As by magnetic force or magic spell,
Resistless led along o'er moor and rock and fell.

27.

That most unhappy Childe that would have fled,
Resistlessly the fell fiend led along
To the dread brink of the swollen river's bed;
Then gibberings rose, and laughter, mid the throng,

That ever grieved at right—rejoiced at wrong,—
And all was well nigh lost! But, lo! the gleam
Of some new guest, breaks forth those fiends among,
And lights the waters of the turbid stream;—
Vanish the ghastly crew like some fantastic dream.

END OF PART SECOND.

CHILDE ALARIQUE.

PART THIRD.

CHILDE ALARIQUE.

PART THIRD.

1.

As withered by the lightning's flash they fade,
And soothing music floats along the air,
Anon a Form in spotless garb arrayed[1]
Stood smiling, where erst stood the fiend Despair—
Her own bright form shed its own lustre fair;
But in her hand a dazzling light was seen,
A talisman, whose magic orbit rare
Shone like a sun-beam on the dusky treene,*
And on the torrent shed a radiance most serene.

* *Treene*, for trees, in Spenser and other old writers.

2.

That hand extending, to the wondering Childe
She gave the lustrous gem; and softly rose
Her accents, like a strain of music mild,
As to the Youth its matchless worth she shews:—
"This talisman, best cure for earthly woes,
Receive, and bear it ever in thy sight;
So shalt thou vanquish thine unholy foes,
And fail not, when thou mark'st its radiance bright,
To think on Her who gave the magic orb of light.

3.

"But if, through negligence or wicked art,
That magic orb no more thy guide shall be;
If thou shalt fail to wear it next thy heart,
And still from slothful stain to keep it free,

And thou neglectest to remember me—

O then, unhappy Childe! beware the day!

For thou shalt drink the cup of misery!

No more the noontide glow, or evening ray,

Or aught of light and joy shall cheer thee on thy way!"—

4.

The vision fled; but still the melting fall

Of heavenly music lingered on its way,

In long withdrawing notes,—like those that call

Some sainted spirit to the realms of day;*—

And still remained the unextinguished ray

Of that rare talisman, whose heavenly light

Poured a rich lustre mid the forest gray,

And emanated through the gloom of night

With soul-exalting influence, most divinely bright.

* "It seemed an angel's whispered call
To an expiring Saint."—*Bridal of Triermain.*

5.

The heavenly strains of soothing music died
Like the soft summer gale in languid mood;
But the bright talisman was left to guide
His homeward steps amid the tangled wood.
The Youth, who, long by Melancholy's brood
Of hideous phantoms haunted night and day,
Felt all the bitterness of solitude,
Now saw the wonted forms in bright array
Arise with sunny smile to cheer his lonely way.

6.

Grovelling and false apostates all are they
Who tell us Nature has no charms to show,
When Winter's heavy clouds deform the day,
And on the woods their darkening shadows throw;

It is the influence dark of worldly woe,
And worldly wickedness that mars the scene:
From Nature's every change can transport flow
To the free mind of Innocence serene,
Alike in groves decayed, or prank't in freshest green.

7.

The soft south-west, pregnant with odours new
From the dank musky matted heaps that rose,
Perfumed the mountain-bowers; and gently drew
With "breezy call" the Childe from his repose,
The while with gratitude his bosom glows
To her who saved him from the fiend Despair—
And straight a strain of heavenly music rose,
And, for a moment, that bright form was there,
And with one rosy smile banished each lurking care.

8.

O happy, happy Childe! no, not alone
Himself his own dark dungeon as before,
Is Alarique amid the wild-wood gone;
No! there were other brighter joys in store.
Though the sweet self-same Muse he loved of yore
Is absent, yet the talisman is there!
And still, as, rapt, he muses more and more
On Her who gave the gem of lustre rare,
Again that form he sees that saved him from Despair.

9.

" On man accursed,—whose dire dominion still
O'er all the inhabitants of earth and air
Tortures inflicts with diabolic skill,—
On man himself, whom agonising Care,

Whom dread Remorse and Apprehension tear,
And hydra Passion's multiplying brood—
What mind can meditate and not despair,
And feel that nought in earth or air is good—
But all is vice, and woe, and pain—and solitude?

10.

" Who muses on this rank unweeded field,
Where nought but seeds of sin and grief have grown;
If happy still, he faëry dreams can build,
Must have a heart of iron or of stone:
Contentment here is wickedness alone!
That man is wise and good who quits the scene,
Burst the base trammels of Delusion,
Leaving for lasting joys this " nook" obscene,
Or dies indeed—and rests in endless sleep serene.

11.

" It must be so! when closed the eyes that see,
The ears that hear—and dead and cold the frame—
And, mouldered down, that frame has ceased to be,—
Can sight, and touch, and hearing, be the same,
When turned to dust the organs whence they came?
And what is *Mind*, but touch, and eye, and ear?"
So wont of old the Sophist to declaim,
But *now* the lustrous gem, with radiance clear,
Far banished from the Childe such dreams of grief and fear.

12.

The spells were broke that had enchained his mind,
And he had but to press the jewel bright,
And straight his heavenly guest, with glances kind,
Removed entire the veil from off his sight,

And straight his intellect was filled with light—
The light of Hope and Confidence in Heaven;
No more mid clouds of intellectual night,
His lonely bark on rocks and shoals was driven,
But all again was calm, and all his crimes forgiven.

13.

O pride, O narrowness! O sophistry
That seeks celestial mysteries to scan,
And deeds of God by human laws to try!
Let man himself first answer, What is *Man?*
Or what is *thought?* what *language?* what the plan,
That rears the simplest bud in Flora's train?

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14.

But leave awhile each object here below
That custom familiarises—lift thine eye
To sights divine that such delight bestow,
That habit cannot quench our ecstacy!
Look on the glories of the vaulted sky—
The sun that pierces now the misty veil—
The moon at even—the countless worlds on high,
And other suns by distance rendered pale,
Amid the mighty sea of boundless space that sail!

15.

Can sights like these be viewed, and shall the mind,
That for a while puts off its base alloy,
And soars to distant regions, unconfined,
Not feel a rising gleam of hope and joy,

A confidence that nought can e'er destroy,
That there shall come a glorious time, when all
The doubts and fears that here the mind annoy,
Shall fade away—as Night's retreating pall,
Before the Morning's ray, and " incense-breathing call?"

16.

" Now blow, thou southern breeze! what ecstacy
To meet thy balmy breath with wonted glow—
Now lour, ye dark clouds of the wintry sky—
And on the woods your saddest influence throw—
Unwearied through the wild-wood let me go—
Where the fallen leaves in matted volumes lie—
And the swollen river's turbid currents flow—
For now each varying aspect of the sky
Wakes inspiration new—and meditations high!"

17.

So sung the Childe, while through the groves he strayed,
And former transports all revived again;
Beauties to him even wint'ry storms displayed,
When swept the driving darkening clouds amain!
The wild heath dark of hue and dank with rain,
The desolate lake, the gray and watery sky,
The long grass rustling on the upland plain,
And all the scenes of wild variety
In Winter's mournful reign new rapture could supply.

18.

Even when arose the volumes vast on high
Of snow-clouds riding on the Borean gale,
When groaned the woods, and flocks and herds did fly
For shelter to the deepest rocky vale—

Then, cheered by inward joys that never fail,
The happy Childe explored the wonted wood,
Trod the pure snows; and when at evening pale
The tempest raged along in fiercer mood,
Homeward, rejoicing still, the well-known path pursued!

19.

Then was that home enlivened by the lay
Of many a mighty bard; and witchery
Of eloquence that never meets decay,
Lifted resistlessly the soul on high;
And chief the legends wild of chivalry
With eager hand did Alarique unroll,
The while (the wild blast idly sweeping by)
Their mysteries deeply sank into his soul,
And awful transport woke that yields not to controul.

20.

March came; and brought the self-same wicked train,
With song and laughter, to the quiet bower;
The self-same echoing sounds arose again;
But Alarique was not alone that hour—
No! the bright talisman, the heavenly Power,
Were there to save him from the fiends of Hell;
Yet, sooth to say, so fiercely did he shower
Reproach and curses on the demons fell,
That almost had he lost the guide he loved so well.

21.

The while his burning ire was wreaked on them
In fearful menaces and accents wild,
A demon dire had almost seized the gem;
But he was checked by the awakening Childe,

That listened now to precepts meek and mild
Of Her who taught him, that the surest way
To quell that sorcerer and his demons vilde,
Was but to hear unmoved all they could say,
Reckless of all their wiles and magical array.

* * * *

22.

'Tis night; but oh what nameless influence reigns?
What soothing balm is floating in the air?
'Tis night;—but are there not celestial strains,
Of power to cure all sadness but despair?
Aye, wandering witch-notes sweet beyond compare
Rising at intervals?—O yes! the lay
Of the gay woodlark from the forest fair,
And the loud blackbird hails the morning ray,
And thousand long-lost dreams the cheering call obey.

23.

Aye, morning dawns; for on the mist-wreaths pale
Faint gleams of rosy light are shed; and lo
The waters faintly gleaming in the vale!
And now, O heaven! behold the orient glow
That o'er the eastern skies begins to throw
Enchanting influence! while the dewy lawn
In diamonds decked unfolds a glittering shew,
And onwards move the glories of the Dawn,
And from the landscape fair the vapours are withdrawn.

24.

But yet no foliage in proud canopy
Adorned the grove; but many a budding spray
Gave promise fair of future majesty
Whence odours met the zephyrs on their way;—

'Twas April, season of uncertain sway,
When fields of new-born verdure charm the sight,
And new-born flowers adorn the wanderer's way,
And the gay lark pursues his cheering flight—
O days of soothing hope, and promise and delight!

25.

Yet though no foliage wantoned in the gale,
To him who long to Pain and Woe the prey,
And haunted long by fiends and spectres pale,
Weary had passed the night, weary the day,
The simplest object in the forest gray,
The simplest note that met his watchful ear,
Brought thousand sunny forms in bright array,
Such as of yore his pathway wont to cheer
When all the scenes were gay and all the skies were clear.

26.

O hues of glory well remembered still!
How break ye on my long bewildered brain!
Effulgent rays that on the purple hill
Your purple tints oft poured at Evening's reign!
Forms of magnificence that rose amain
How had ye all dissolved by chill decay!
How were ye rent and scattered by the train
Of unrelenting fiends, that night and day
Fed on my wasted heart, and wore my life away!

27.

Days, too too little prized, of pure delight
That fled on rapid wing, Oh yet again
Shall the same lovely charms salute my sight?
Shall I the same enchanting walks regain?

Shall the same light revisit my parched brain
That shone by fits not duly prized of yore?
Is that the skylark's voice, the blackbird's strain?
Are those the morning mist-wreaths floating hoar?
And shall these peaceful shades my wonted peace restore?

28.

In lays incondite, thus Childe Alarique
Again his long-lost ecstacy exprest;
The glow of gladness mantling on his cheek,
And new-born ardour rising in his breast,
Through the wild scenes his wonted way he prest,
And watched, entranced, the opening scenes of morn.
O boundless springs of rapture, purest, best,
To minds that Fancy's faëry beams adorn,
By no dire self-reproach or worldly passions torn!

29.

Henceforth, where'er the Childe his path pursued,
Even when through crowded scenes he dared to go,
He dwelt in that surpassing solitude
That few have known, and few shall ever know—
He moved amid the scenes of vice and woe,
To him innocuous, trusting in the power
Of Her whose arm had saved him from the blow
Of the fell fiend Despair at midnight hour,
When the loud torrent raged, and darkest clouds did lour.

30.

Scarce is it mid the vernal woods more sweet
Than in the haunts of men, *alone*, to be;—
Where all is vice, woe, folly, and deceit—
The bosom to preserve serene and free;

The varying scenes of various life to see,

Trusting in Heaven, that " all shall yet be well,"

Though now unsearchable is Heaven's decree!

And feeling that " to doubt is to rebel,"

Onward to go rejoiced—till sounds the warning knell.[2]

31.

And yet, the sooth to say, 'twas sweeter far

To thread the wild-wood mazes, and to view

The lake-waves glitter to the evening star,

And renovate the soul-enchanting hue

That poesy o'er all the wild-woods threw,

And meet again that Muse beloved of yore,

While, " purer from the searching fire," he knew

The soul more vigorous and apt to soar

Through Virtue's flowery paths to heights unknown before.

32.

I write not to the dull unthinking few,
That need demand whence broke the heavenly ray
That o'er the Childe celestial influence threw!—
And feeble grows my voice; and fast away
The visions from my raptured sight decay;
And "pangs reviving rend my heart anew:"
How quickly melts the vision's fair array!
How fast return the clouds of murky hue!
And now the wild-wood scenes all vanish from my view.

33.

But whoso loves the Youth, or loves the lay
That feebly strives his fortunes to declare,
Or loves in faëry dreams to waste the day,—
Let him to yonder lonely vale repair;

There sleeps the Childe; and faëry revellers there
Each night with freshest flowers the sod bestrew;
And "light of heart" the "village maiden fair"
In "morn of May" oft glides the valley through,
And braids her hair with flowers besprent with fragrant dew.[s]

NOTES.

NOTES ON CANTO FIRST.

' Page 1. *The following lines were suggested, &c.*]—The species of vicissitude which the author has attempted to describe, has been common to every highly-gifted mind from Shakspeare to Cowper. Some of the noblest intellects have been overthrown in the struggle. Others have been supported by that inestimable light of Reason, which, though clouded for a while, was too powerful to be wholly quenched. Shakspeare survived; but Chatterton perished. Yet, who that reads the speeches of Hamlet, or King Lear, or Jaques, or numerous other passages that might be referred to, (more especially some of the minor poems and sonnets,) fails to perceive the deepest and most unequivocal tone of heart-rending and heart-felt despondency?

If any truly poetical mind was ever free from this tendency, perhaps it was that of Ariosto. Yet of him it is recorded that he was never seen to laugh, and rarely to smile. And of his irascibility Sir John Harrington gives a remarkable instance. *See* HOOLE'S *Life of Ariosto, p. xci.* 1799, 8*vo.*

[2] Stanza 4. *With vernal hues and white haze beautified.*]—Almost every one must have observed and felt the influence of that transparent haze which always attends fine weather; and forms almost the greatest source of the picturesque. In a chill *clear* atmosphere even the finest landscape loses at least half its charms. As I picture to myself, the scenes that I have beheld under this influence, what recollections arise! What emotions are called forth! But these recollected scenes are not, as Dr Beattie has said, "illuminated with a sort of purple light." Oh no! that purple light of gladness and of hope has faded for ever. Through the cold medium of disappointment and despair, and with the weight of accumulated sorrows on my heart, I behold them!—It has been said that I have imitated Lord Byron in my Poem; after this note I shall at least not be accused of imitating his style in my prose. But how little do such half-witted critics know of Lord Byron—and how little do they know of me!

[3] St. 4. *Childe Alarique.*]—It is almost needless to observe that the name *Childe* was immediately suggested by Lord Byron's admirable romance. But the name only is borrowed. Childe Alarique is put for any poetical character—Burns, for example, or Cowper.

[4] St. 7. *What bliss in every breath of "common air."*]—

> "The meanest floret of the vale,
> The simplest note that swells the gale,
> The common sun, the air, the skies,
> To him are opening Paradise."—GRAY.

Perhaps there is not any poet, ancient or modern, who can furnish so many exquisite lines within the compass of so small a volume as the author of the fragment now quoted. How justly is it observed in the *Censura Literaria*, that the whole body of English, or any other poetry, cannot supply a finer verse than the following!

> "*The breezy call of incense-breathing Morn.*"

[5] St. 10. *And hear the inexpressive harmonies.*]—In alluding to Mrs Tighe's poem, I cannot resist the temptation of transcribing these three excellent stanzas.

1.

" Delightful visions of my lonely hours,
Charm of my life and solace of my care,
O would the Muse but lend proportioned powers,
And give me language equal to declare
The wonders which she bids my fancy share,
When rapt in her to other worlds I fly,
See angel forms unutterably fair,
And hear the inexpressive harmony
That seems to float on air, and warble through the sky.

2.

" Might I the swiftly-glancing scenes recall,
Bright as the roseate clouds of summer's eve,
The dreams which hold my soul in willing thrall,
And half my visionary days deceive,
Communicable shape might then receive,
And other hearts be ravished with the strain;
But scarce I seek the airy threads to weave,
When quick confusion mocks the fruitless pain,
And all the faëry forms are vanished from my brain.

3.

" Fond dreamer, meditate thine idle song;
But let thine idle song remain unknown:
The verse which cheers thy solitude prolong;
What though it charms no moments but thine own,

Though thy loved Psyche smile for thee alone,
Still shall it yield thee pleasure, if not fame;
And when, escaped from tumult, thou art flown
To thy dear silent hearth's inspiring flame,
There shall the tranquil Muse her happy votary claim."

Canto V.

Pure and elevated spirit! Thy "dreams" have not all died with thee! But we wish for more. Why are the other writings of Mrs Tighe suppressed? Why are there no accompanying memoir,—no letters,—no records of real life given with the poetry? Or is all this still in contemplation?—1812.

[6] St. 12. *The falcon's voice remote.*]—The effect of the falcon's solitary cry is peculiarly fine amid the vast mountains of the Scottish Highlands; and is rendered still more striking when the deep stillness of autumn reigns around.

[7] St. 15. *An angel-form.*]—This allegorical personage was designed to represent the Genius of Poetry, or poetic inspiration.

NOTE ON CANTO SECOND.

' St. 8. *Braggadochio.*]—Put for any ordinary, unfeeling, boasting, worldly-minded character. The character of Thurlow opposed to that of Cowper,—or the great dignitary who, when Ariosto presented to him his Orlando, said " where the devil have you picked up all this nonsense?" will perhaps occur to the reader. But I intended to suggest a character, if possible, yet more debased and degraded—a character such as Burns too often encountered, and by whose influence he was led into vice, and untimely ruin and decay.

NOTES ON CANTO THIRD.

[1] St. 1. *A form in spotless garb arrayed.*]—By this personage the author wished to represent Religion; by the celestial talisman, the light of Reason and Conscience. It was the idea of the lamp of Aladdin which suggested this. I had completely forgot the "celebrated talisman of Oromanes," and was much amused by the coincidence, when I lately read the first of those excellent Tales, * which form a standard classic in every nursery, but which I had not seen for fifteen years.

[2] St. 30. *Till sounds the warning knell.*]—This expression is not used merely to furnish a rhyme, or eke out a stanza. It is suggested by the recollection of some lines of Mr Strutt, in "The English Minstrelsy," (Edin. 1810,) but I have not the book to refer to.

[3] St. 33. It is perhaps needless to say that the concluding part of this last stanza refers to a well-known passage in "The Minstrel."

* Tales of the Genii.

[4] The very day on which I had finished these three Cantos, I met, for the first time, with a poem of Dr Beattie's, entitled The Triumph of Melancholy, (Poems and Translations, Lond. 1760, *) in which there is a coincidence of plan so close with that of the preceding Reverie, that I am tempted to add a few stanzas as a specimen.

"Memory, be still! Why throng upon the thought
These scenes deep-stain'd with Sorrow's sable dye?
Hast thou in store no joy-illumin'd draught
To cheer bewilder'd Fancy's tearful eye?

Yes—from afar a landscape seems to rise,
Deckt gorgeous by the lavish hand of Spring;
Thin gilded clouds float light along the skies,
And laughing Loves disport on fluttering wing.

How blest the Youth in yonder valley laid!
Soft smiles in every conscious feature play,
While to the gale low-murmuring through the glade,
He tempers sweet his sprightly-warbling lay.

Hail, Innocence! whose bosom, all serene,
Feels not fierce Passion's raving tempest roll!
Oh ne'er may Care distract that placid mien!
Oh ne'er may Doubt's dark shades o'erwhelm thy soul!

* Reviewed by Mr Park in the Censura Literaria.

Vain wish! for lo, in gay attire conceal'd,
Yonder she comes! the heart-inflaming fiend!
(Will no kind Power the helpless stripling shield!)
Swift to her destined prey see Passion bend!

Oh smile accurst to hide the worst designs!
Now with blithe eye she wooes him to be blest,
While round her arm unseen a serpent twines—
And lo, she hurls it hissing at his breast!

And, instant, lo, his dizzy eye-ball swims
Ghastly, and reddening darts a threatful glare;
Pain with strong grasp distorts his writhing limbs,
And Fear's cold hand erects his bristling hair!

Is this, O Life, is this thy boasted prime?
And does thy spring no happier prospect yield?
Why gilds the vernal sun thy gaudy clime,
When nipping mildews waste the flowery field?

How Memory pains! Let some gay theme beguile
The musing mind, and sooth to soft delight.
Ye images of woe, no more recoil;
Be life's past scenes wrapt in oblivious night.

THE END OF CHILDE ALARIQUE.

WALLACE:

A

FRAGMENT.

One fatal remembrance, one sorrow that throws
Its bleak shade alike on our joys and our woes;
To which life nothing darker or brighter can bring;
For which Joy has no balm and Affliction no sting.

MOORE.

The following stanzas were suggested by the recollection of some incidents and descriptions in that powerful enchantress Miss Porter's excellent romance, "The Scottish Chiefs;" from which, whatever merit they possess is derived. I have merely turned into rugged verse a short fragment of that highly-finished and admirable production.

I shall here briefly mention the incidents which form the foundation of my Poem.

During a temporary absence of WALLACE *from Ellerslie, Hesilrigge, one of the petty tyrants em-*

ployed by the usurper Edward I. for the oppression of Scotland, made a sudden attack on the castle, and barbarously murdered Lady Marion, the lovely and amiable wife of the hero.

At the beginning of the following verses, WALLACE *is supposed to be acquainted with this event, and is introduced wandering amid wild scenery at a considerable distance from Ellerslie, and meditating self-destruction, from which he is withheld by the instigations of Revenge. At that moment his old and faithful retainer, Halbert the Minstrel, arrives, bearing the sword with which the villain perpetrated the horrible deed.*

What follows is occupied in endeavouring to describe the hero's conflicting emotions of grief, re-

gret, and indignation; and in briefly commemorating a few events which distinguish the commencement *of the wonderful and interesting career, so nobly described in the work to which I have alluded.*

July 3, 1813.

WALLACE:

A FRAGMENT.

* * * *

1.

THEN Memory brought the thousand charms in view
Of days too little prized, to wake no more;
And all the forms in faëry colours drew
Of Love, and Hope, and Joy, that reigned of yore;
Nor aught of sweetest ornament forbore;—
Then rushed the tide of present misery,
And all Imagination's cherished store
Resistless whelmed; at once the vernal sky
Was wrapt in darkest clouds, and tempests wild and high.

2.

Night fell upon the woods, and heavily
Reposed upon the copse the vapours gray;
While all the air was filled most soothingly
With balmy odours from the wildwood spray;
Night fell; and all was peace; but WALLACE lay
Alone upon the heath, and fever's fire
And wild delirium on his frame did prey;
While wandering witch-notes of the feathered choir,
Not joy, but fiercer thrills of anguish did inspire.

3.

"O God, who rul'st on high"—the unfinished prayer
Was checked by the o'erwhelming weight of woe,
And died in fearful accents of despair;
From the high rock he marks the abyss below

In double darkness wrapt, and hears the flow
Of the swift currents echoing far remote;
And sudden with awakening rapture's glow
Hails with delight the soul-enchanting thought,
Death yet is in his power—the blissful calm he sought.

4.

Blame not, ye pious dull unthinking crew,
Who know not the dominion of despair;
Blame not the anguish which ye never knew,
Who know not Virtue's genuine glory fair,
Who know not those ecstatic sweets to share
That Nature gives and Genius wild and high;
Blame not the lonely soul that thus could dare
The bold adventurous fearful change to try,
And leave at once a world of pain and misery.

5.

O soul! what art thou when the magic bands
Of bright Imagination are untied?—
A wandering exile on unfriendly strands,
With nought but sin and woe on every side!
When ardent fancy's faëry hues have died,
What pain the dread realities inspire,—
When all the angel forms that wont to glide
Mid the fair fields are changed to spectres dire,
For ever quenched and cold the Muse's mounting fire.

6.

Or when some dear-loved partner of our joys,
In whom we lived,—who lived in us,—is gone;
When for the soothing smile, the cheering voice,
Nought, nought is left but the cold marble stone

And dust enshrined,—O then how heavy grown
Are all the glories of the vernal year,
How vainly from the verdant copsewood thrown
The varied woodnotes wild! how changed appear
The meads of many flowers, the lake-waves sparkling clear!

7.

And chief, if mid the stilly hours of night,
When all is hushed, and the soft vapours float
On wood and wold, and odours of delight
Rise from the groves, some wandering matin note
Has from the torpor of thy sorrow brought
The feelings keen of life-consuming woe—
Then all the wild-wood scenes with rapture sought
In former hours bright visions to bestow,
But nerve the shrinking arm to point the impious blow.

* * * *

8.

But on the wanderer fell the influence new
Of some high power, and rivetted awhile,
He stood upon the brink, then backward drew,
Where stood a Form with most unearthly smile,
Whose presence did his fell intent beguile;—
That loathly shape was rolled in vapours hoar,
That half-concealed his hell-born features vile,
His right hand held a dagger stained with gore;
"Diest thou? O base resolve! thy just revenge forbore!"

9.

The Form decayed; for on the eastern sky
A gleam of rising purple did appear,
But in the tangled wood a rustling nigh
Proclaimed that one of mortal race drew near.

There is!—his hoary locks are thin and sere—
His aged cheeks are worn by keenest woes:—
A transient gleam of long-lost joy sincere
Rises in Halbert's eye, as now he knows
The Knight, and at his feet his way-worn frame he throws.

10.

They twain were silent, but the Minstrel drew
Forth from his mantle's fold a naked brand;
It is the sword that Lady Marion slew,
When guided by the ruthless traitor's hand.
It is her blood whose drops congealed stand
On the sharp blade; her guiltless blood that cries
To heaven for vengeance on a murderous band!—
The knight received the sword with streaming eyes—
Anon in fury sought to quell his miseries.

11.

And forward, forward through the scenes of morn,
They twain the tangled pathway did pursue;
The scenes to them so desolate and forlorn
Were decked by all that can enchant the view:
The woods were veiled in mist and hung with dew—
The skies in purple brilliance were arrayed,
And all the scenes adorned with magic hue,
Ten thousand songsters from the flowery shade
Awoke the song of joy, and sweetest music made.

12.

The long, long valley opened on their view,
Where seen afar the dancing waters shone;
And flocks and herds reposing mid the dew,
And scattered hamlets fair to lok upon.

And now an echoing blast the knight hath blown;
The well-known-bugle notes were heard afar,
Resounding 'mid the cliffs and caverns lone:
Where all was peace, now all was roused for war,
As when a smiling sea the rising tempests mar.

13.

Then might you, from the tranquil hamlets, view
At once the shepherd gay and maiden fair,
Blythe as the sunbeams, pure as morning dew,
And aged dame, and seer with hoary hair,
And childhood's happy race come forth to share
The tidings which the echoing notes proclaim:—
And many a shepherd from his heathy lair,
Where all night long the flocks a watcher claim,
Forth to the eye of day from his concealment came.

14.

O happy, happy scene! might this but last!
Tell not, my song, how soon the charms decay!
Tell not how these fair visions fade so fast,
That Memory scarce can tell they once had sway!—
Tell not how soon the bright hues melt away,
That o'er life's dread realities are cast,
How soon dark wintry clouds deform the day,
And Innocence and Bliss for ever past,
Fade like the autumn leaves from winter's withering blast.

15.

So fares it with each earthly gleam of joy,
As then it fared in that sweet pastoral vale;
Now all is calm and sheltered from annoy,
Now all o'erwhelmed in wintry tempests pale—

O Disappointment! stern supporter! hail,
Give to my soul thy animating glow!
Give me to prize whate'er within the pale
Of mortal grasp of happiness can flow,
And seize each fleeting bliss bestowed on man below!

16.

The Knight, that in the shock of headlong speed
But sought to lose the o'erwhelming sense of woe,
In silence hurried on through moor and mead,
And to his aged follower left to shew
The cause that gave that echoing blast to blow.
Then quick as meteor might'st thou mark the fire
Of martial ardour through the valley glow—
And armour donned in haste by son and sire,
And even the sorrowful maids to join their aid conspire.

17.

The sun shone brightly and the breezes blew,
And onward with unwearied pace they fare,
From crag to crag the tangled path pursue:
Little recked they of Nature's beauties rare;
Nor staid the sweets of sylvan scene to share,
But forward, as the lion to his prey,
Right on they go through rocky pathways bare,
Till well nigh done was the sweet vernal day,
And the sun shot afar his level streaming ray.

18.

Then had they come to lovely Ellerslie,
Lovely alas! of yore, and jocund too!
Yet lovely in decay! the brilliancy
Of setting sunbeams gave the scene to view.

The groves that late were decked in many a hue
Of brightest bloom, a wilderness of flowers,
Were scorched and dead; black smoke and ashes threw
Their sooty veil o'er the once happy bowers;—
O days too lightly prized and aye-departed hours!

19.

O life! how soon thy vernal charms decay,
Even though by fell misfortune unassailed,
Thy joys the short gleams of an April day,
How soon by gathering clouds and tempests veiled!—
With cries of vengeance now the warriors hailed
The towers of Ellerslie erewhile so fair,
Where all the horrors of decay prevailed,
And yet the smouldering embers tinged the air
With lurid smoke, and all was ruin and despair.

20.

The Knight but cast one look of anguish keen,
Where once had flourished his sweet lady's bower,
Then turned him from the soul-distracting scene,
While doubled terrors on his brow did lour.
Fast, fast they hied them from the ruined tower
And the sweet sylvan vale, and now the day
Was done indeed,—and twilight 'gan to pour
Her mellow light;—then in the south the ray
Of moonlight fair arose, and led them on their way.

21.

The town was hushed, and all seemed slumbering there,
Only the watcher on the tower appeared;
But Heaven seemed in their enterprize to share,
And WALLACE with a shout the fosse has cleared.

And his brave band by his example cheered,
Close following, their leader's steps pursue:—
The while his threatening arm on high upreared,
Awed the weak sentinel, his followers true
Right onward to his aid with rapid progress drew.

22.

Pass we the scene of blood; the moon on high
That saw the avenger's warlike band draw near,
Saw them depart; the murderer lifeless lie,
Ghastly in death:—the rising radiance clear
Of gentle morning 'gan the woods to cheer,
When they the well-known valley did regain,
Where all the scenes in wonted charms appear;—
Alas! to bosoms torn by cureless pain,
Such charms are mockery all! such landscape smiles in vain.

23.

The rustic maidens, innocent and gay,
Prepare the couch for way-worn warrior meet,
Who from the dawning of a former day
Had toiled the work of vengeance to complete;
And Wallace, mid the cavern's dim retreat,
Found shelter from the garish eye of day;
Vengeance was wreaked; the balmy odours sweet
Of heath flowers bathed his forehead as he lay;
And for a space in sleep his anguish died away.

24.

Then rose the form (as erst to Petrarch's eye
His Laura's shade) of Marion, heavenly fair;
Then faded slow; and rising harmony
Told of the matchless joys that angels share,

Yet left a dreary void for dire despair—
Anon that dreary void was filled anew
By sounds and shapes of wondrous import rare,
And tinged by radiance of enchanting hue—
Most earnestly on them the hero fixed his view.—

25.

A female form arose, of loveliness,
But she was bathed in tears, and all around
Were sights and sounds of pain and wretchedness;
And all with chains that lovely dame was bound.
And now she kneeled upon the scorched ground
The while her merciless enemy reared on high
A blood-stained brand, still threatening many a wound,
And nought was given unto the hopeless eye
But images of woe, and want, and misery.

26.

Then might'st thou mark the Autumn's golden store
In flames ascend; anon in ashes lie;
And cities razed; and hamlets of the poor;
A dusky waste most mournful to the eye,
The "monuments" of England's "cruelty."*
Sudden that lovely dame, a transient ray
Of hope reviving, looked imploringly
On Wallace, and for vengeance seemed to pray
On the fell bands that wrought that ruin and decay.

27.

Thereon a burst of heavenly music rose,
A long unearthly strain of sweetness rare;

* In smoky ruins sunk they lie,
The monuments of cruelty.
SMOLLETT.

And to the watcher's eye the scenes disclose
A form whose charms what minstrel might declare?
Her right hand held a verdant chaplet fair
Of laurel leaves; her left a trumpet bore;—
" Thy love is gone the joys of Heaven to share;
" And wilt thou die for her and love no more?—
" No, thou shalt live for me, and Scotland's weal restore!'

28.

The sky-lark mounting 'mid the realms of day,
Was carolling his joyful song on high;
Anon the magic visions died away,
And space was left for dread reality;
And with a groan of wakening agony
The hero met the sun's inspiring ray—
" O Marion blest! O days of ecstacy,

" Ere duly prized, for ever fled away!"—
Lowly upon the earth the vanquished victor lay.

* * * * * * *

* * * * * * *

29.

A lovely sylvan scene it was, where high
The wooded rocks in wild luxuriance piled,
Rose circular in awful canopy,
And all beneath sweet greensward *tomhans* * smiled,

* The following account of *tomhans* is taken from an author whose descriptions of Highland scenery seem always written from the dictates of genuine feeling, and are therefore animated with all the freshness and breathing beauty of reality.

" The fairy mounts, or little regularly formed cones, which abound so much in the Highlands, have been from time immemorial accounted the abode of fairies. In some places, as at the foot of the moun-

And murmuring streams the weary mind beguiled:
There never foot of man had trod before;
The tranquil solitude was undefiled,
A virgin fortress: and boon Nature's store
Of fruits and wild flowers bright adorned the mountains hoar.

tain Corryarick, on the south side, a large space of ground is entirely covered with them. These are most regularly formed of equal size, and covered with the bilberry and fox-glove.

" All along that road numbers of these conical hillocks are seen rising in dry gravelly ground, and thickly covered with heath; whereas at Lochan Uvie, they rise at a broader base, with a conical summit, to the height of eight or ten feet, and are covered with diminutive birch. The perfect regularity of their form, their resemblance to each other, and the light foliage constantly playing round them, give a singular and fantastic appearance to the scenery.

" Here the fairies are supposed to dwell, and the children's nursery tales are full of wonders performed by the secret dwellers of these *tomhans*, or fairy hillocks."—MRS GRANT'S ESSAYS, I. 280.

30.

There notes divine of Heaven's own minstrelsy
Rung to the echoes of the rocks around,
And mingled with the ceaseless accents high
Of foaming cataracts that their way had wound
From ledge to ledge of rock; or under ground
Their secret course they took, and strangely lent
To watchful ears variety of sound—
In sooth through all the faëry scenes were blent
All sweetest sights and sounds for lonely merriment.

31.

The lonely wanderer that had thither come,
If wanderer e'er had thither bent his way,
Beneath the shelter of the sylvan dome
Might joyful pass the longest summer's day,

Nor e'er become to weariness the prey;

So many varied treasures *there* abound—

O sweet to hear the foaming currents play!

O sweet to sit with rustic garlands crowned,

Or search amid the rocks for caverns most profound!

32.

By the fair features of the sylvan scene

Entranced, almost I had forgot to tell

That in the lovely wilderness serene

Sequestered far, an Eremite did dwell;

Yet if to mortal wanderer befell

To tread that sylvan wild, yet never one

That dared against the will of God rebel,

Or innocent blood had shed, or deed had done,

Or thought conceived of ill, that paradise had won.

33.

No—this old Hermit was a sinless soul,
That loved his beads to tell both night and day;
Nor knew the stain of worldly passions foul,
Nor impulses of sin did e'er obey;
'Mid the deep caverns of the mountain grey
His dwelling was, whence loved he still to view
The varied woodland charms that round him lay;
The while Devotion on the scenery threw
Her own enchanting light of purest heavenly hue.

34.

But yet the Wallace and his armed train
Knew not the presence of the Hermit old;
But gladly saw that all pursuit was vain,
And with delight their fortress 'gan behold,

Where still so far the ponderous fragments rolled
Their bulk enormous on the inward dell,
So many secret caverns did unfold,
That 'mid the fastness of this rocky cell
Free from each hostile band they might in safety dwell.

35.

And Halbert had to Bothwell sped the while,
To raise the friends of Liberty and Fame;
And they had but the moments to beguile,
Till the brave Murray to their rescue came;
Meanwhile the youthful band would ditties frame
Of pastoral joy, yet more of chivalry;
Nor needs there pastime rude or artful game
For solace of their idlesse hours to try;
Nor languishment they knew 'mid that sweet scenery.

36.

There greensward *tomhans,* lovely to behold,
With wild-wood crowned, arose, and many a flower,
Where faëry trains their mystic revels hold,
Still by the moonlight pale at midnight hour ;
And still the crystal streams their waters pour,
Murmuring those haunted eminences among ;
And O how sweetly from the secret bower
Awakes the woodlark gay his cheering song !
Him join the blackbird loud, and all the feathered throng.

37.

In such a scene, at such a season gay,
How beats the swelling heart attuned to joy !
How quickly fades each darkening trace away,
Of earthly passion vain, and base annoy !

(For even the lightest hearts have some alloy
Of mortal care) but to the widowed heart
Whom wonted charms can never more employ,
Such beauties but increase the cruel smart,
And fiercer throbs of woe and fond regret impart.

38.

Thus fared the Knight—from rock to rock he went
Each rocky path and object to explore,
And waste in bodily toil his discontent;
And now he finds a secret archway hoar;
A channel deep it was that torrents wore
Of wintry tempests bred; but now the flow
Of those unruly cataracts was o'er,
And lichens on the grey rocks 'gan to grow,
And spear-grass to ascend, and vernal flowers to blow.

39.

This pathway found, with gratitude the band
Gladly each rude impediment clear away,
That might their sudden secret march withstand;
And when they gain the beams of upper day,
Most carefully a covering they lay
To veil the portal from invaders' view;
And thence departing, with like toil assay
Their first-found path from every hostile crew,
With ponderous rocks to bar, and boughs of verdant hue.

40.

Night fell, and not, as wont, did lingering light
Cheer the fair chambers of the northern heaven,
But gathering storms and phantoms of affright
In wild disorder o'er the skies were driven;

Nor aught of soothing moonlight ray was given:
Night fell; and darkness brooded on the scene;
While Wallace watched the darkening clouds of even,
First, for a space, he owned a mood serene
Steal on his heart,—the gift of sympathy I ween.

41.

Most mournful to Misfortune's heavy eye
Is the fair scene when vernal sunbeams glow,
But when the clouds of eve portentously
Settle around, and rising night-winds blow,
Or when sweet Autumn's last, last lingering shew
Of yellow gleams is past, and damp and brown
The leaves in sooty wreaths are strewed below
The parent boughs, and clouds the mountain crown,
Then even, Despair, thine heart a transient joy must own!

42.

But, hark! O whence the fearful sounds that rise,
Borne on the gale? what wanderers are nigh?
Is it the fell Fiend's fatal witcheries,
That seeks the good to ruin to decoy;
Is it some victim sad of treachery,
Struggling beneath the assassin's pitiless blow?
Hark, hark again! from yonder summit high,
Where a faint gleam of twilight seems to glow,
The fearful shrieks are borne;—"What ho! brave comrades, ho!"

43.

Fast, fast as wild-fire through the secret way,
The armament their hurried course pursue,
Till the wide heath they tread, where not a ray
Of moonlight tremblingly gives aught to view—

But hark again !—his sword each warrior drew,
And by the sound directed 'gan to fly—
But now, the louring tempest breaking through,
A gleam of moonlight lights the scenery,
And straight reveals a scene of direst cruelty.

44.

There lay upon the heath a lovely form,
That with a reckless demon struggled sore
(For none, save demon, fell as midnight storm,
To loveliness such malice ever bore.)
At once the patriot band in wrath him tore
From his fair prey, and him with fetters bound,
And his detested train, resistance o'er,
And man by man laid prostrate on the ground,
Fit guerdon for their deeds in chains and fetters found.

* * * * *

45.

The Maiden woke, and lovely lustre shone
In the full orb of her inspiring eye;
Whence beams of hope and fortitude were thrown
On her deliverers brave inchantingly;
Sweet as the moon-beam's mild serenity,
That speaks unto the riven heart of woe,
And bids the phantom forms of madness fly;—

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46.

So woke the Maiden—soothing as the ray
Of moonlight—lovely as the beam of morn,
When emanating through the frost-fog grey,
Whose banners Autumn's fairy scenes adorn;

* An unfinished stanza.

(O what a tide of cherished thoughts are borne
Swift on my soul!) but now the Maiden bright,
When left amid that rocky cell forlorn,
None present save the Eremite and Knight,
Most fearful tidings told, and treacheries brought to light.

* * * * * *

NOTES.

NOTES.

NOTE I.

Stanzas 9, 10.—" But what of my wife, Halbert; why tell me of others before of her?—surely she remembers me! some message!"

" Yes, my dear Lord;" cried Halbert, throwing himself on his knees in a paroxysm of mental agony; " she remembers you where best her prayers can be heard. She kneels for her beloved Wallace before the throne of God!"

" Halbert!" cried Sir William, in a low and fearful voice, " what do you say? my Marion—speak! tell me in one word she lives!"

" In heaven."

At this confirmation of a sudden terror, imbibed from the ambiguous words of Halbert, and which his fond heart would not allow him to acknowledge to himself, he covered his face with his hands, and fell back with a deep groan against the side of the cavern.—The horrid idea of premature maternal pains, occasioned by anguish for him; of her consequent death, involving perhaps that of her infant, struck

him to the soul; a mist seemed passing over his eyes, life was receding; and gladly did he believe he felt his spirit on the eve of joining her's.

Halbert, thinking that he had revealed the worst in declaring that the idol of his master's heart no longer existed for him in this world, went on—" her latest breath was spent in prayer for you. *My Wallace*, were the last words her angel spirit uttered as it issued from her bleeding wounds."

The cry that burst from the heart of Wallace as he started on his feet at this horrible disclosure, seemed to pierce through all the recesses of the glen, and with an instantaneous and dismal return, was re-echoed from rock to rock. Halbert threw his arms round his master's knees. The frantic blaze of his eyes struck him with affright.—" Hear me, my Lord! for the sake of your wife, now an angel hovering near you, hear what I have to say!"

Wallace looked around him with a wild countenance—" My Marion near me! Blessed spirit!—Oh, my murdered wife, my unborn babe!—Who made those wounds? Tell me," cried he, throwing himself down on the ground, and seizing Halbert with a tremendous though unconscious grasp; " Tell me, who had the heart to aim a deadly blow at that angel's life?"

" The governor of Lanark," replied Halbert.

" How? For what?" demanded Wallace, with the terrific glare of madness shooting from his eyes; " my wife, my wife! what had she done?"

" He came at the head of a band of ruffians; and seizing my lady, commanded her, on the peril of her life, to declare where you and the Earl of Mar and the box of treasure were concealed. My lady persisted to refuse him information, and in a deadly rage, before I was aware, he plunged his sword into her breast."—Wallace clenched his hands over his face, and Halbert went on; " before he had aimed a second blow, I had broken from the men who held me, and thrown myself on her bosom, but all could not save her; through my neck the villain's sword penetrated her heart."

" Great God!" exclaimed Wallace, again springing on his feet; " dost thou hear this murder?" His hands were stretched towards Heaven; then falling on his knees, with his eyes fixed, and his arms yet extended, " Give me power, Almighty Judge!" he cried, " to assert thy justice.—Let me avenge this angel's blood, and then take me to thyself!"

" My gracious master!" cried Halbert, seeing him rise with a stern composure from his knees; " here is the fatal sword with which the

cruel governor killed my lady. The blood on it is sacred, and I brought it to you."

Wallace took it in his hand. He gazed at it, touched it, and kissed it frantickly. The blade was hardly yet dry, and the ensanguined hue came off upon the pressure. "Marion! Marion!" cried he, "is it thine—Does thy blood stain my lip!" he paused for a moment, leaning his burning forehead against the fatal blade; then looking up with a terrific smile, "Beloved of my soul, never shall this sword leave my hand till it has drunk the life-blood of thy murderer." —*Scottish Chiefs, vol. I.* 121.

NOTE II.

Stanzas 11, 12, 13.—Halbert now followed the rapid steps of Wallace, who, assisting the feeble limbs of his faithful servant, drew him up the precipitous side of the Lin; and then leaping from rock to rock, awaited with impatience the slower advances of the poor old harper as he crept round a circuit of overhanging cliffs, to join him on the summit of the crags.

Together they struck into the most inaccessible defiles of the mountains, and proceeded, till, by the smoke, whitening with its ascending curls the black sides of the impending rocks, Wallace saw he was

near the objects of his search. He sprung on a high cliff which projected over this mountain valley, and blowing his bugle with a few notes of the well-known *pibroch* of Lanarkshire, was answered by the reverberation of a thousand echoes.

At the loved sounds, which had not dared to visit their ears since the Scottish standard was lowered to Edward, the hills seemed teeming with life.—Men rushed from their fastnesses, and women with their babes eagerly followed, to see whence sprung a summons so dear to every Scottish heart. Wallace stood on the cliff like the newly-aroused genius of his suffering country. His long plaid floated afar, and his glittering hair streaming on the blast, seemed to mingle with the golden fires which shot from the heavens. Wallace raised his eyes; a clash, as of the tumult of contending armies, filled the sky; and flames and flashing steel, and the horrid red of battle, streamed from the clouds upon the hills.

"Scotsmen!" cried Wallace, waving the fatal sword, which blazed in the glare of these northern lights like a flaming brand, "behold how the heavens cry aloud to you. I come in the name of all ye hold dear, of your lives, your liberties, and of the wives of your bosoms, and the children now in their arms! the poniard of England is unsheathed:—Innocence, age, and infancy, fall before it. With this

sword, last night, did Hesselrigge, the English tyrant of Lanark, break into my house and murder my wife!"

The shriek of horror that burst from every mouth interrupted Wallace. "Vengeance, vengeance!" was the cry of the men, while tumultuous lamentations for the "sweet lady of Ellerslie" filled the air from the women.

Wallace sprang from the cliff into the midst of his brave countrymen. "Follow me then to strike the first blow!"

"Lead us forward!" cried a vigorous old man, "I drew this stout claymore last in the battle of Largs. *Life and Alexander* was then the word of victory: now, ye accursed Southrons, ye shall find that the slogan of *Death and Lady Marion!* will be a cry to bring angels down to avenge her blood and free the country!"

"*Death and Lady Marion!*" was now echoed with loud shouts from mouth to mouth. Every sword was drawn. And those hardy peasants who had none, seized the instruments of pasturage; and armed themselves with wolf-spears, pick-axes, forks, and scythes.

Sixty resolute men now arranged themselves around their chief. Wallace, whose widowed heart turned icy cold at the dreadful slogan of his Marion's name, more fiercely grasped his sword, and murmured to himself—"From this hour may Scotland date her liberty, or

Wallace return no more!—My faithful friends," cried he, turning to his men, and placing the plumed bonnet on his head, "let the spirits of your fathers inspire your souls! ye go to preserve that freedom for which they died. Before the moon sets, the tyrant of Lanark shall fall in blood."

"Death and Lady Marion!" was the pealing answer that echoed from the hills.

Wallace again sprung on the cliff. His brave peasants followed him; and taking their rapid march by a near cut over the most precipitous heights, and through the hitherto unexplored defiles of Cartlane craigs; leaping chasms, and climbing perpendicular rocks; no obstacles impeded them, as they rushed onwards like lions to their prey.—*Scottish Chiefs, vol. I.* 121.

NOTE III.

Stanzas 22, 23.—"The sun was rising from behind the eastern hills, when the victorious group entered the mountain glen where their families lay. The cheerful sounds of their bugles aroused the sleepers from their caves, and many were the joyous gratulations and embraces which welcomed the warriors to affection and repose."—*Scottish Chiefs, vol. I.* 134.

NOTE IV.

Stanza 28.—" It was noon before the chief awaked from the death-like sleep into which kind nature had plunged his long harassed senses. He opened his eyes languidly; and when the sight of his rocky apartment forced on him the recollection of all his miseries, he uttered a deep groan.—That sad sound, so different from the jocund voice with which Wallace used to issue from his rest, struck the ear of Halbert, who, meanwhile, had prepared a staff and scrip for his journey. He drew near his master, and kissing his hand, begged his permission to set out for Bothwell—" On my knees," added he, " will I implore the earl to send you succours."—*Scottish Chiefs*, vol. I. 351.

FRAGMENT.

FRAGMENT.

1.

How still the woods! save when the cheering voice
Of the gay redbreast from his fading tree
Bids the lone wanderer's pensive heart rejoice,
Who marks the forest's varying canopy!
How bright the noonday's mild serenity,
Beneath whose reign the sparkling currents dance;
While, as my heart renews its vernal glee,
And roams mine eye the landscape's fair expanse,
Straight has my fancy fallen in visionary trance.

2.

For now, I view once more the valley drear
Where lone Moneira wakes his sullen moan,
And straight revives the "supernatural cheer" *
Which to my ravished fancy *there* was shewn,
When I had wandered through the woods alone,
O'er cliff and moor, one clear autumnal day,
Till evening's shadows o'er the scenes were thrown:
Then from the Heavens appeared in bright array
The Genius of the Land, and woke the mighty Lay.

3.

Then seemed departed monarchs there to wake
Echoes anew from wood and rocky vale,
As through Glenfinlas' copse and tangled brake
The stag, new roused, fled, swift as morning gale;

* "Rich are his walks with supernatural cheer."—*Wordsworth.*

And as from far the notes were heard to sail
Of merry horn that calls the reaper crew,—
Wild-echoing through the copse and mountain dale,
Seemed as the hunter gay his bugle blew,
And urged the jovial chace the lonely forests through.

4.

Then, called from old traditionary lore,
Strange legends did that lofty Muse impart;
At morn, I saw the prancing steed that bore
The hunter from the mistress of his heart,
I marked her ominous dread and inward smart.
At eve, I saw her lover stretched afar,
And each fond hope from that fair Maid depart,
As now she heard the rallying shout of war,
And saw the watch fire gleam on silvery Vennachar.

5.

Then too I marked, on Lubnaig's lonely strand,
The maid, of lovely form and laughing eye,
At evening hour, unconscious idly stand
To mark the sunset's purple brilliancy;
While the fell Kelpie took his station nigh,
And, as the twilight splendour died away,
Woke dulcet strains of magic harmony;—
Then, as she listened, seized his hapless prey:—
Nor ever more that maiden met the light of day.

6.

But ever as through haunted wood and moor,
At morn or soothing eve, I bent my way,
His strains deep graven in my heart I bore,
Who woke the "Northern Harp" and "Border Lay,"

And decked with flowers full many a legend grey,
That else had slept in dark neglect forlorn;
But now shall flourish in unfading day,
And brighten, like the glories of the morn,
To renovate its hues in "ages yet unborn."

7.

Here, as in these lone woodlands I devote
The day to floating dreams and careless rhyme,
Each object thus to Fancy's eye is brought,—
Each form of ragged oak or cliff sublime,—
Each feature wild that marks that magic clime
Where Superstition holds her ancient reign!
I hear Inchmahon's sacred vespers chime,
I see that Goddess of the cliffs again,
And hail the spreading lake far gleaming on the plain!

* * * * * *

8.

Oh might the heaven-born influence that inspired
The soul of Cona's deathless bard of old
Illume once more those scenes beloved, admired,
So might I their enchanting grace unfold!
But, ah! my touch is weak, my fancy cold!
Dark clouds e'en now have veil'd each floating dream;
Vainly I strive high colloquy * to hold
With wandering Muses by the mountain stream:
Gone are my rising hopes! decayed each dazzling gleam!

9.

Yet leave me not! Oh, do not all depart!
Seems as the world, with its detested crew,
Each warm emotion freezing in my heart,
Their darkening influence on my senses threw,

* "Whose colloquy doth fill the breast with heat."—*Marriot.*

And dashed each beauteous image from my view.—

O, dreams beloved! solace of many a day,

Once more dark Melancholy's clouds subdue;

Brighten once more my path with magic ray,

And drive the spectre forms of real life away!

NOTES.

NOTES ON THE FRAGMENT.

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[1] THE following remarks were sent as a paper for insertion in a miscellaneous work (now in the press *) of a highly valued and distinguished literary friend. Although they have been honoured with a place in the work alluded to, yet I venture to insert them here as an illustration of the preceding verses.

" It is seldom, perhaps, at the time they are first visited, that grand and romantic scenes are viewed with a proper degree of unalloyed enjoyment. Too often the fatigues of travelling, especially if one is obliged to modulate his conduct and emotions to the various, and sometimes discordant, opinions of a party, accidents of weather, &c. infuse a bitter alloy into the cup of pleasure. It is afterwards, when, in hours of bodily repose and mental energy, the scenes are vividly

* The Ruminator, by Sir S. E. Brydges, K. T. M. P.,—now published, 1814.

presented by remembrance, that fancy revels in visionary creations, and the mind, becoming independent of the realities by which it is surrounded, fixes itself on the 'past, the distant, and the future.'"

It was at this very season of the year that I first visited the Scottish Highlands, and now, no sooner arises a fine autumnal morning, than, in imagination, I escape from the flat and unvaried scenes of my little farm, and once more seem to behold the magnificent and sublime landscape arrayed in the gossamery haze, and illuminated by the yellow gleams of this enchanting season.

It is thus that to a poetical mind the continual presence of magnificent scenery is not essentially requisite. Although surrounding objects are neither striking nor romantic,

> "Yet is poetic impulse given
> By the green earth and clear blue heaven," *

and the mind revels with all the fervour of enjoyment in its own creations. In the last melancholy letter which winds up that painfully affecting tragedy, Hayley's Life of Cowper, the poet observes, "The country that you have had in prospect has always been admired for its beauties; but the wretch who can derive no gratification from a view of Nature, even under the disadvantages of her most ordinary dress, will have no eye to admire her in any."

* Scott.

Yet, however just the remark of Cowper, I have often thought that to a person of a cultivated and poetical mind, the Scottish Highlands present such a sphere of inexhaustible pleasures and delightful research as no other region could possibly afford; and I have often wished that, with adequate talents, I had also the power of devoting myself to the collection of Celtic legends, blending with their narrative, pictures of the wild and sublime scenery in which they were discovered. To no country can the beautiful stanza of Lord Byron be with so much justice applied:

"To sit alone, to muse on flood and fell,
To slowly trace the forest's shady scene,
Where things that own not man's dominion dwell,
And mortal foot hath ne'er or rarely been;
To climb the trackless mountain all unseen,
With the wild flock that never needs a fold,
Alone o'er steeps and foaming falls to lean;
This is not solitude; 'tis but to hold
Converse with Nature's charms, and see her stores unrolled."

I never lived in any region where I found myself so independent of human society, and so completely engrossed by "supernatural cheer." As often as I watched the declining sunbeams of an autumn day, gleaming on the placid waters of Loch Vennachar, Loch Katrine,

or the wilder and more desolate Loch Ow, I found myself, as it were, abstracted from every earthly tie; and could not help looking forward with peculiar pleasure to the moonlight evening that was to succeed, in which I was fully assured of beholding the mysterious revel of the *Daoine Shie*, or *Men of Peace;* of hearing the sweet music which floats around the "faëry habitation of a multitude;" besides encountering more than one of those awful forms of doubtful character that are known to haunt almost every lake and rocky pass in that region of enchantment.

The propensity of mankind to dwell on the terrific and the marvellous is universal. Perhaps no passion or belief, not even that of the existence of a Deity, is more prevalent, more inseparably an inmate of the human breast, than that of a certain undefined apprehension at the idea of an intercourse with the world of spirits. (It has been admirably pourtrayed by that inimitable authoress Miss Baillie, in her tragedy of Orra.) In no country is there such an infinite share of terrific legend, and indeed of traditionary tales of every description, as in the Scottish highlands. Yet a little longer, and not even the faintest traces of the warlike, or even of the pastoral, life will remain, and with them will die away every vestige of those poetic treasures.

Many of them, indeed, live in the pages of Scott, of which the "Glenfinlas" is an admirable specimen; and the recent "Essays" of Mrs Grant are highly estimable; but, comparatively speaking, little has yet been atchieved on this wide and interesting field.

[2] Stanza 6. "*Ages yet unborn.*"—

"If to *make the past, the distant, and the future, predominant over the present* be to *advance us in the scale of intellectual beings,* then how high a station does he merit who lives in a conflict of passions, who endures the heated temperament of fancy, who suffers poverty, neglect, and scorn, and calumny, for the sake of delighting those whom he has never seen or perhaps heard of, and *of charming, by the efforts of his muse, the wide shores of the Atlantic and ages yet unborn!*"—BRYDGES, *Censura Literaria, II. p. 55.*

VARIA.

VARIA.

The Exile. Part First.

1.

« Aye, the bright sun will rise; in glory rise,
And all the heavens be filled with yellow light;
And balmy dew-mists of the summer skies
Wake notes of rapture, odours of delight;
But shall he rise on those green canopies
Of wild-wood gay, that wont to charm my sight?
O no! the lovely scenes are gone for aye;
For ever quench'd, and cold, Imagination's ray.

2.

" And on my vitals pain with ceaseless sway
Preys like the secret canker in the flower,
Wasting unseen my life and hopes away,
Barring the gates of Fame's immortal bower;
And on my path attend both night and day
A train of demons that my heart devour,—
Anger, and Shame, and Disappointment fell,
And dire Despondency,—relentless fiends of hell.

3.

" But oh the lovely scenes that I have known!
Not all Imagination's witchery,
When seated radiant on her sapphire throne,
Can equal Nature's fair reality;

Nor of high-pealing instruments the tone
E'er match'd the notes of heaven-taught harmony,
When purple gleams and fall of fragrant dew
Warn the gay choirs at morn their descant to renew.

4.

" Gone, gone are these; and Guilt and Misery
Are my companions now where'er I go;
And former joys, that did so swiftly flee,
To recollection brought, but mock my woe."*

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— — — — —
— — — — —
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* An unfinished stanza.

5.

Thus mid the scenery desolate and drear,
The Exile mourn'd, poor man! for Memory
In vivid colours bade the groves appear
That never more would greet his longing eye;
While the dim ghosts of early transports dear
Gave tenfold keenness to his agony.
On the lone shore he stray'd, and woo'd the gale
Chill breathing o'er the waves of ocean pale.

6.

But, sudden, as he trod the sandy shore,
By force resistless was he borne away;
And memory, thought, and sight return'd no more
Till he was floating on the ocean gray

In a strange bark, impell'd by sail and oar,
Where sat the wonted comrades of his way:
And far receded from his sight the strand;
And torments fresh awoke that he might not withstand.

7.

O ghostly, ghostly was that vessel's crew;—
There Apprehension sat, and Pain and Woe;
And as their course through ocean they pursue,
Despair himself uprearen at the prow.
On the wide waves the Exile bent his view,
And torpor o'er his senses 'gan to flow;
(Not the sweet calm of hope-restoring sleep,)
For now the winds awoke the horrors of the deep.

* * * * * * *

8.

Despair, that sat him on the vessel's prow,
Uprearen his gaunt arms into the air,
And with a shout that echoed high and low,
Seem'd some compeer from hell to summon there.
Straight at the sound the rising might you know
Of a strange light, that danced with fearful glare;
But far remote yet seem'd the mystic ray,
But onwards swiftly still pursued its lonely way.

9.

Amid the clouds of lurid ghastly hue
That light came dancing o'er the ocean swell;
Who bore it, by Saint Bride, I never knew,
But, sooth to say, he had his birth in hell.

It overhung the bark, it inward drew—
Then from the Exile burst a feeble yell,
For in his brain at once that hellish light,
Like lightning buried quick, evanish'd from the sight.

10.

Then in the sufferer's brain that horrid fire
The marrow dried; and now no more the ray
Of reminiscence, that had wont to inspire
Thoughts of the long-lost joys that once had sway,
Remain'd,—but all was ruin, madness dire,
And Fancy's wild creations died away.—
Nought, nought remain'd, but pain's o'erpowering sense
From that accursed fire's keen influence.

11.

On, on they go,—that vessel and her crew,—
Her ghastly crew and their unhappy prey;—
On, on they float,—o'er waves of murky hue;—
Down sank the darkening clouds on ocean gray,
And tenfold night her mantle o'er them drew,
And phantom shapes arose in dread array.—
How long they sail'd now 'fits me not to tell—
Leave we the Knight awhile with those dread fiends of hell.

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12.

It is the balm of an autumnal breeze,—
A breeze that floats o'er fading leaves and flowers;

It is no chilling night-gale from the seas,—
It is the fragrance of autumnal bowers,
The breath of lingering verdure on the trees
Woke by the fall of morning dews or showers.
O happy hour!—that gale renew'd again
The long-lost calmness of the sufferer's brain.

13.

The fire was quench'd, and slowly now the ray
Of reason 'gan return. O happy hour!
The clouds and storms of night have lost their sway;
The tranquil sunbeams on the waters shower
Their influence sweet; the fiends have fled away,
Awed by the presence of some heavenly power.
He sees it is the sun—the smiling sea—
And feels the happy gales restore serenity.

14.

Listen! O listen!—'tis no earthly strain;
It is the voice of angels from the sky
Hymning the praise of God—the billowy main
Is hushed to hear that sacred harmony.
Listen! O listen!—for the sounds again
In thousand blended notes arise on high.
O 'tis the voice of seraphs on the deep,
Calling the sufferer from his painful sleep.

15.

If e'er at morn, when odorous dews of night
Rest on the woods, thy slumber has been broke
By thousand songsters to the radiance bright
Chaunting their homage from some wooded rock,
And thou hast felt the thrills of pure delight,

And blest the birds that thee from sleep awoke,
Then, though that sound with this may not compare,
Yet thou shalt know what songs of angels are.

16.

For mark the man in whom each simplest sound,
And simplest sight in Nature's treasury,
With genuine fulness of delight hath crown'd,
That man can taste the sweets of poesy:
And none but such can tell what joys abound
When angels wake unearthly melody.
Tell not of drums and clarions echoing far—
These are deceitful arts to hide the woes of war.

17.

And such a man I knew, whose common talk
Fitting itself unto the base and low,

(Alas! and all that in his daily walk
Him cross'd were such) no genius e'er did shew,
But ever moved in the most beaten track;
But when alone, immortal flowers would blow
Round his wild path, and heavenly lustre stream,
Till common cares again dispell'd the magic dream.

* * * * * * *

18.

The Knight beholds the sun, the smiling sea,
And looks around him on the waters blue;
And he is not alone; the brilliancy
Of sun-light gives a lovely form to view,
That steers the vessel onward in her glee,
The while the western breezes gently blew;
That form was FORTITUDE, a mighty dame,
Of lofty rank in all the rolls of Fame.

19.

But now, up rose an island to the sight,
Whence came the balmy odours of the air;
For though that island, in the yellow light,
Shew'd nought at first but grey rocks rude and bare,
Yet there were fields of waving harvest bright,
And dells of wildwood scattered here and there,
Within the boundaries of that magic land,
Wherein the peerless dame that steer'd the vessel reign'd.

20.

High were the rocky cliffs that frowning rose,
Whereon the tranquil autumn sun display'd
The lichen grey on sternest brow that grows,
And tall hypericum, not yet decay'd.

But now the scenes fresh wonders 'gan disclose,
As from the vessel to the shore convey'd,
Awhile the Exile on the strand alone
Gazed on the sights of joy and woe that thence were shewn.

21.

For, through a deep ravine thence might he view
A distant prospect of a goodly scene;
But painful was the path that valley through,
And many a lurking danger lay between
The wanderer and the fields of lovely hue,
That crown'd the distant landscape most serene;
Rock, shattered pine, morass, and water-fall
Were there, his sinking spirits to appal.

22.

Nor earthly barrier only met him there;
For lurking demons ever and anon
Grasp'd at their former prey; and many a snare
Contrived, by which the Knight might be o'erthrown:
Yet ever and anon, amid the air
Was heard the swell of some celestial tone;
And the bright glance of wings "bedropt with gold"
Compell'd the demons to forego their hold.

23.

As nigh the lake, yclep'd the Lake of Hell, *
By Scottish bard extoll'd in deathless lay,
A glen there is, the abode of satyrs fell,

* Loch Ketturin.

Oft seen by shepherd swain at close of day,
Unscar'd by holy sound of vesper bell,
Half heard from far Inchmahon's old abbaye—
The *Coir nan Uriskin*, that strange valley hight;
St Mary, guard the swain that wanders there by night!

24.

Aye, joy inspired him, even 'mid all his care;
For still he mark'd the promised landscape gay,
And heard sweet warblings borne along the air,—
The distant music of the redbreast's lay,
That on the bough, not yet of foliage bare,
Hail'd the soft splendours of the autumn day.
But lo! his toil is crown'd with mirth at last,
And all the terrors of the way are past.

25.

A palace rose, the abode of Fortitude:
Huge pillars rude of rock the roof upbore;
Within were chambers vast, that Labour hew'd
Within the bowels of the mountain hoar.
There might you penetrate, until renew'd
You heard the voice of ocean on the shore,
Or saw the purple of departing day
O'er the wide azure waves diffuse its lovely ray.

26.

With Fortitude her sister Industry
Oft-times sojourn'd; and frequent might'st thou view
Labour his burden struggling rear on high,
And busy husbandmen their task pursue;

And feeble sufferers wan, with sunken eye,
New guests amid those fields of lovely hue,
Gradual their strength recover, and assay
To glean the scatter'd ears within their grasp that lay.

27.

It was, I ween, a land where Industry
Had most surpassing deeds achieved; for there,
Boon Nature scatter'd not her bounties free:—
The frowning cliffs were all of verdure bare;
But wheresoe'er the blossom, fair to see,
Of heath or furze perfumed the vernal air,
In every lowly dell that careful Maid
The golden harvest rear'd, or nursed the forest shade.

28.

A kindling vigour in the Exile's frame
Awoke, what-while he breathed the charmed air,
That from the fields of yellow lustre came,
Where troops of labourers and maidens fair,
The guerdon of their former toil to claim,
Went gaily forth autumnal sweets to share.
Such pleasant sights the fleeting day beguiled,
When first the Wanderer gain'd the rocky region wild.

29.

Befits me not in lengthen'd song to tell
The varied pleasures of fair Autumn's reign;
For they are sung by Wootton's bard * so well,
That none shall e'er achieve such lays again;

* Brydges.

And, save that master of the charmed shell, *
None e'er achieved,—who sang in deathless strain
Each varying season's blissful influence,
And magic realms of wizard Indolence.

30.

But when the last enchanting scenes were o'er
Of many-coloured groves and yellow rays,
And clouds had settled on the mountains hoar,
Then did the Exile spend the shortening days
In listening to the mighty ocean's roar,
And cataracts that wintry tempests raise,
And the long hours of cheerless darkness wore
In calling mighty spirits from the grave,
Of many an errant knight and stern crusader brave.

* Thomson.

31.

The Exile. Part Second.

Lonely he wandered on the sea-beat shore;—
Watching the sportive billows all alone
Wandered the Knight: the fragrant gales upbore
The waves that in the cheering sunbeam shone,
And chafed their summits into fringes hoar,
As o'er the wide waste they came dancing on.
The knight that wandered on the lonely shore
Felt the sweet scene his long-lost ecstasy restore.

32.

Aye; fragrant were the gales that on him blew;
It was the blessed breath of May that rose,
And o'er the waters of cerulean hue
Her influence brought of pleasure and repose;

And now his heart was filled with gladness new,
And new-born ardour in his bosom glows.
O lovely were the scenes around him shewn,
Lovelier than aught that he had looked upon.

33.

For o'er that island height a wilderness
Of flowers arose; the furze was all in bloom,
And with most brilliant colouring did dress
The rugged cliffs and shed a rich perfume,
While the eye mark'd from many a wild recess
The happy fields a vivid green assume;
And the fair forests waving in their pride
On the slope shelter of the mountain side.

34.

But who can tell that influence divine
That lives and operates on each living thing,
When the first fragrant southern gales benign
Awake the sleeping energies of spring?
When all the woodland choir anew combine
The song of joy and gratitude to sing,
And leaf and blossom bursting into bloom,
Load every passing gale with exquisite perfume?

35.

Hark! 'tis the cuckoo's magic voice aloud,
And all the rocky scenes around him ring!—
Scared at the music of that warning proud,
In Iceland grot impervious to the spring,

Stern Winter hastes his withered form to shroud.
Thereon, the happy nymphs and labourers bring
The freshest garlands from the wildest wood
To deck the rocky shrine of FORTITUDE.

36.

But as on Rona's melancholy isle,
That mirthful voice still wakes the chords of woe;
And banishes of youth and age the smile,
So now, succeeding to that voice did flow
A tide of mournful thoughts! and for a while
Lost to the scene the Knight was wandering slow;
Till sudden to his sight an aged man
On the lone sea-shore to appear began.

37.

Scarce seemed that bending form so shook by age,
As by the inward force of fantasy,
That, painting woes that nothing might assuage,
Him stung more keenly than Reality;
For still he seemed as blotted from the page
Of sinners that shall ever pardoned be,
And nought unto his harassed brain was given
But dreams of crime and woe, and stern unpitying Heaven.

38.

And Apprehension hight, this woeful man
Where'er he went did blast each lovely thing;
For, as he walked, the flowers to shrink began,
And shrieking fled the thrush on angry wing.
Unheedful he, now stood, now walked, now ran,

And as an aspen's light leaf trembling,
And by wild weakening fancies ever crost,
Gazed fearfully around, like schoolboy on a ghost.

39.

Aye; from his presence every happy thing
Did shrink; the bright leaves withered on the bough;
And, nearer as he came, the Knight did fling
His frame unnerved upon the sea-beach low;
And, thoughts of woe again quick mustering,
His new-born happiness did all o'erthrow.
But he was rescued from the demons dire,
By Fortitude, that marked approach that wicked sire.

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40.

On the sea-shore he wandered till the ray
Of dying day-light 'gan to tinge the wave;
Then sat him down to watch the slow decay
Of pensive twilight from a rocky cave;
But the low murmur of the ocean gray,
And the sweet soothing light such influence gave,
That ere he wist the Knight was lulled to sleep,
And visions o'er his senses 'gan to sweep.

41

A lovely realm appeared; full well he knew
The fair domain where fled his early years;
And spring had decked the groves in brightest hue,
The scene in all its wonted charms appears,
And seemed fair glittering the dew-mist through,

Gemmed by a vernal morn's refulgent tears.—
Almost the Knight to tears of joy was moved
To recognize the scenes so earnestly beloved.

42.

Embosomed 'mid the trees a tower arose,
Whereon the purple gleams of morning shone;
And in that tower with swelling heart he knows
The mansion where his sweetest years had flown.
On the wide lake the vernal zephyr blows,
Where first he wept at tales of the renown
Of Wallace, mighty Chief! and heaved the sigh
That ever Scot should bend to slavery.

43.

Then, changing still, the visionary scene
Revealed the castle proud, within whose bowers

The empress of his heart had sheltered been,
While now the sun a cheering lustre pours,
And all the groves are pranked in freshest green,
And the fair gardens filled with brightest flowers.
Anon, alas! each lovely scene was changed,
And all its hues decayed and order disarranged.

44.

The pleasant sojourn of his Infancy,
The well-known gardens, lake, and mossy tower,
Whereon the sun had shed his brilliancy,
These fell into the stern Invader's power.
Red flames ascending wrapt the tower on high,
And even the verdant forest did devour.
On the fair fields black soot and ashes lay,
A dismal sight, I ween, of ruin and decay.

45.

But now, alas! yet more of grief appears;
For from the castle proud whose painted bowers
Contained the empress of his heart, in tears
Of bitterness, fast falling down in showers,
And shrieks that filled with agony his ears,
That maiden bright is driven; the sight o'erpowers
His heart with grief so sudden and so keen,
That all at once is closed the visionary scene.

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46.

Childe Arthur.

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Sweet soothing dreams his weary mind possess'd
Of early days, long past, when all was gay,
And, seated on the mountain's fragrant breast,
He felt the summer gales around him play,
And heard sweet music wooing him to rest;
O lovely was that vision's fair array,
Lovelier than aught that youthful poets dream
Of fairy-land at eve by some romantic stream.

47.

He felt the influence of the blessed sun,
The summer sun that on the scenery shed
His glowing tints, how sweet to look upon!

And clad in partial gleams the mountain's head.
He saw the meads their fairest garb put on,
In hues of green and azure, white, and red,
From whence the passing breezes odours bore
Of power the long-lost thrills of gladness to restore.

48.

He saw the forest's waving canopies
In pride and pomp ascend, and met the gale
Wafting celestial influence through the skies.
He saw the waters gleaming in the vale,
He heard the voice of hound and horn arise,
And sweeter far the blackbird in the dale,
The lone sequestered covert, wake on high
The varied tones of woodland minstrelsy.

49.

He saw the splendours of a smiling sea,
The glassy mirror of the quiet tide,
Whereon reposing in tranquillity,
Gay palaces reflected were espied,
And waving woods, and, sailing on in glee,
Seen double, ship and shadow in their pride,
All these, and more than lay like mine can tell,
He saw, that gave his heart with gratitude to swell.

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50.

But wakening from his trance, O not the swell
Of soothing music met his eager ear;
O not the vernal scenes beloved so well,
Nor sunny gleams around him did appear.

O no! that comfortless and dismal cell
Had nought the sight to charm, the heart to cheer,
All furred with mouldy damps, and pictured round
With phantom shapes that Pain and Madness bade abound!

51.

Harsh were the grating sounds that drove away
The sweet creations of Childe Arthur's dream;
The clank of chains, the iron hinges bray,
That gave admittance to a transient gleam!
And dire the chill reality whose sway
Assumed the place of Fancy's fairy beam.
How soon like Autumn's foliage are they gone,
The lovely scenes so sweet to look upon!

52.

High in the mouldering wall a grating threw
A tinge of sun-light on the scene below,
And gave Childe Arthur, woful man! to view
The man who came his pittance to bestow,
That ever loved (what Virtue scorns to do)
To wreak resentment on defenceless foe.
On the faint gleam Childe Arthur fix'd his eye,
As claiming fortitude that malice to defy.

53.

That gleam awoke in Arthur's heart the glow
Of Hope and Virtue and Devotion high:
But that stern keeper did each morning go
Through all the scenes of wild variety,

And saw the purple gleams their influence throw,
Yet felt no love of Nature's majesty;—
But from the morning air refreshment drew,
His infamous delights more ardent to pursue.

54.

For in that heart where genuine Cruelty
And Treachery innate have their abode,
The scenes that lift the virtuous heart on high
From Nature's loveliness to Nature's God,
But give new fervour to Iniquity,
And aid the shoots of sin to spread abroad.—
His mirth is wickedness;—to him the Spring
No joys but such as demons feel can bring.

55.

This Keeper stern that self-same autumn day
Had through the woodland mazes wandering been,
Had seen the sunbeams on the lake-waves play,
And partial gleams illume the changing scene;
And from the lovely landscape's fair array,
And the sweet odours of the fading treene,*
Like toad or asp or venomed monster foul,
Had but refreshed, I ween, the malice of his soul.

56.

O long and weary was the silent day
To the poor prisoner in that dreary cell:
For him no cheering note of redbreast gay
Was trill'd; nor hunter's horn the breeze did swell.

* *Treene*, for trees, in Spenser and other old writers.

Stedfast he watched the feeble twilight ray

That through the grated loop-hole slanting fell,

And the chill damp-drops counted, one by one,

That trickled from the roof, and dropt upon the stone.

57.

There came a minstrel to the castle gate

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* An unfinished stanza.

58.

To him that long in dungeon dark hath lain,
O who can tell how sweet the simplest sight!
The meanest floret on the grassy plain,
The faintest blush of morning's ruddy light!
Thus to the Childe the sylvan scene again
Was destined to arise in radiance bright,
But yet, the night-clouds hung on wood and wold,
And frost-fog floated round in banners dense and cold.

59.

The soothing odours of that quiet wood
Rose on his languid frame with influence new:
It was the sweetest haunt of solitude,
And there each Alpine plant and floret grew,

Whose odorous breath long-lost delight renew'd,
And round his tranquil path enchantment threw;
But now the morn with vermeil cheek 'gan rise,
And slow-ascending streaks illumed the orient skies.

60.

The varied features of that sylvan scene
Rose 'mid the splendour of the dawning day,
Most lovely to behold; for there, I ween,
Nor art fantastic marr'd the fair array
Of Nature wild; nor ruthless axe had been:
But all was rich and flourishing and gay.
In mazy groups and knolls the wild-wood grew,
(A wilderness of sweets) in many a varied hue.

61.

Heard you the dying fall of music sweet
On the high mountain-summit slow decay?
O will those angel voices not repeat
The heavenly accents of their choral lay?
Have they for ever died?—O no! they meet
Again my ravished sense, and steal away
My soul from earthly woes how far!—O heaven!
Are such enchanting sounds to earthly wanderers given?

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62.

Amid the woodland scene there did appear
An old man bent by time, with hoary hair;
He seemed some venerable bard or seer,
Or hermit grave, or sage medicinayre.

Right courteous to the Childe approaching near,

He told that 'mid that lonely region fair,

Full many a wond'rous grot and cavern lay,

Whither he only knew the secret winding way.

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63.

" O stay, divine illusions, for a while,

" Nor let the cold clouds of Reality

" Return to check the melancholy smile

" With which the well-known regions I descry!

" O let the fond remembrances beguile

" The silent hours that all too swiftly fly!

" So in these fleeting moments I shall know

" Even more delight than all the past could e'er bestow!

64.

" Enchantress Hope ! yet on my senses shed

" Your magic treasures ! teach me to pursue

" The fond delights of many a former hour,

" Too lightly prized, thus living life anew !

" Teach me in bold resolves aloft to tower,

" And yet to grasp the virtuous honours due,

" Whose base usurper's unrelenting chains

" So long have galled each nerve, and fired my feverish veins."

65.

Thus, as the hour of matin prime awoke

Childe Arthur from his transitory rest,

Grateful, in accents of delight he spoke,

The-while the bird of autumn blithe exprest

His guiltless raptures from the wooded rock,
Whose simple voice inspired those visions blest!—
O most transporting is that simple voice
To all whose bosoms pure the woodland scenes rejoice!

66.

Prince Arthur had by basest treachery
Lost the fair kingdom where, in early days,
He reigned in gladness and prosperity;
But memory still would sweet creations raise,
And Hope would paint gay landscapes to his eye,
And with rich hues adorn the woodland maze
Wherein he saw his portraiture displayed,
Rejoicing as of yore amid the well-known shade.

67.

But O ! the fond delusions all were doom'd
Too soon to meet disorder and decay !
For when he would the wild-walk have resumed
To drink the freshness of the new-born day,
While now the rising sun the scene illumed,
He found his frame to sorcery the prey.
That bower was barred by negromantic spell;
That Hermit was, alas ! a minister of hell !

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69.

Fragment.

It is the balmy southern breeze that blows
Sweeter than gales of Araby the blest,
Diffusing o'er my frame divine repose,
And soothing each unquiet thought to rest;
A languid calm my wearied fancy knows,
And languid hopes yet linger in my breast,
That, ere I die, some trophy may be won,
Some vision realized, some deed of glory done.

70.

But, oh! how vain the hope! the leaf that's borne
On the soft southern breeze is not more frail!

Brief are the cloudless rays that life adorn,
And long and dark the tempests that assail;
And but to struggle on, nor vainly mourn,
Nor o'er inevitable sorrows wail,
Nor cease with ardour virtue to pursue,
Is all that even the best and wisest here may do.

71.

If merry voice of labouring hind, or balm
Of woods autumnal, fields of golden grain,
Could to my harassed mind impart a calm,
Here are they all! and yet my woes remain!
For ever lost to me the victor's palm,
Me bound, alas! with adamantine chain
Forged by the fiends, whose unrelenting sway
Bids every youthful hope fast fading meet decay.

72.

Yet, oh! the softness of that western gale!
It spreads around divine tranquillity!
Though dark the tempest-clouds that life assail,
Yet there are magic gleams of ecstacy!
And ever when the west-wind sweeps the vale,
Fresh Hope is roused and Fancy soars on high,
And recollected visions rise amain,
And legendary lore comes crowding on my brain.

73.

Kenneth.

In dark Glenesk the deer were safe at morn,
And sportive in the copse were seen to play,
Where diamond drops did every leaf adorn,
That glitter'd in the morning's lustre gay;
But loud at noonday rang the hunter's horn:
Anon a merry train in proud array,
To drive the royal deer on mountain ground,
Did thither bend their course with horn and horse and hound.

74.

Long was the chace; befits me not to tell
The varied fortunes of the field that day,
(Who love not on such idle theme to dwell!)
Long was the chace; they drove their panting prey

O'er moor and wood and wold till evening fell,
And twilight died upon the mountain grey,
And dusky clouds rode threatening o'er the sky,
And the rude night-breeze moaned portentously.

75.

Alone at eve amid that heath forlorn
The Royal Hunter urged his venturous way :—
At length he tarried; and his echoing horn
Resounded 'mid the mountain caverns grey ;
But no response was on the breezes borne !
In vain he looked for his attendants gay.—
All, all alone, amid that mighty wood,
The King was left in trackless solitude !

76.

And darker clouds their fearful influence shed,
Enormous gloom! on mountain, lake, and plain,
And heavily on his defenceless head
Drove the relentless blast and chilling rain,
While Fancy, with unwonted visions fed,
Dim shapes of terror woke in ceaseless train;
And fears till then his heart had never known
Chilled every shrinking nerve; his esperance was gone.

77.

At length he mark'd a solitary ray
Far in the shadowy void; and with delight,
Though rude and rocky was the dangerous way,
His course he thither urged with all his might.

Ere long a joyful sight did him repay,
For, emanating through the gloom of night,
A dazzling radiance on the scene was cast,
And soothing music rose, and floated on the blast.

78.

O most refulgent was that castle high!
Blazed every traceried arch, and all around
Rung the blithe notes of mirth and revelry,
And courteous welcome now his wishes crown'd.
Within were scenes enchanting to the eye,
For melting dames in every bower were found,
And rich repast and goblets brimmed with wine,
And music's purer charms the senses did refine.

79.

Midnight; but who 'mid those delightful bowers
E'er long'd for sleep! their mirth seem'd ever new;—
But sudden thunder shook the castle towers,
And every smiling dame grew pale of hue;
Anon unearthly horror all o'erpowers;
From pale their cheeks were changed to livid blue!
And with demoniac shrieks they vanish'd all!
Only the Lady-Host remain'd within the hall.

80.

" Relentless Tyrant! lo! thine hour is come!
" The youth whose guiltless life was reft by thee
" For vengeance cries from his untimely tomb.
" Relentless king! for thee no game nor glee

" Shall ever more awake ! Behold thy doom,

" Fit guerdon for thy reckless cruelty !"—

Then with a shout that mighty dame hath fled—

Anon the scene was changed to mansions of the dead.

81.

First all was dark ; then blue sepulchral flame

Rose wavering all around, and gave to view

Dire objects of affright unmeet to name :

Anon a ghastly form came wading through

The dusky flames ; whose bleeding mangled frame

Soon as, with wild affright, King KENNETH knew,

With screams he fled from the detested sight,

And frantic sought to shun his enemy by flight.

82.

The monarch now, who spent the autumn day
Driving the mountain deer, himself was driven;
Till he had reached the self-same copsewood gray
Where the view-shout so merrily was given:
Nor breathing time was granted him to pray!
Lochlee danced wildly to the blast of Heaven,
And KENNETH from a beetling crag was dash'd,
And wildly o'er his corse the blue refulgence flash'd.

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83.

Fragment.

O Melancholy! softly-soothing maid!
Much do I owe to thine enchanting sway;
For thou hast led me through this leaf-strown glade
Duly at early morn and evening gray;
Then, at thy call, unwonted charms pervade
The simplest scene amid the forest gay.
O nought exalts the soul to mood so high
As thy celestial pure society!

* * * * * * *

84.

"MIND for itself creates society;"—
So said the Roman hero famed of old:
Man *never is alone!* The woods supply
Health to the body; to the mind unfold
Best fellowship, conceptions wild and high;
While oft in crowded scenes wan spectres hold
Dominion o'er the soul, and quench the flame
That fills with heavenly bliss the poet's frame.

85.

If e'er this withered heart hath known the glow
Of inspiration high, it is when sleep
Hath soothed to rest each corporal source of woe,
And morning smiles upon the mountain steep,

And forth into the forest-walks I go,
O'er which the health-inspiring breezes sweep,
And only with the SHADOWY TRIBES OF MIND
I pass my social day in raptures unconfined.

86.

Yet not with heavenly trains and angels bright
Alone is past the day; for endless store
Of legends wild then HISTORY brings to light
That long have mouldered in oblivion hoar;
And with enchanting hues the scenes are dight,
That more than pristine splendour can restore,
As when the rising morn with purple ray
Illumes the mouldering tower and desolate abbaye.

87.

Fragment.

And all around interminable heath

Filled the wide scene; on which the morning ray

Faintly diffused a watery gleam; no breath

Of ruder wind disturbed the vapours gray,

That rolled their mighty banners still as death;

Then forth into the woods he bent his way

The Melancholy Knight!—sweet odours rose,

And half had lulled his anguish to repose.

88.

But pain, alas! awakening in his frame,

Shot his keen darts; for slow consuming cares

Of warlike knight had left him but the name,

And whitened with untimely frost his hairs,—

Then to the lonely wilderness he came
To breathe the freshness of autumnal airs,
In solitude remote, where not a voice
In accents rude might dare arraign his humble choice.

89.

But ever and anon, though Pain awoke,
Would some sweet odour float upon the gale,
And the dread spells of wasting anguish broke;—
It seemed as if some undiscovered vale,
Obscured perchance by high o'erarching rock
That hope-reviving odour did exhale
From unseen wildwood flourishing in pride,
Casting its balmy fragrance far and wide.

90.

Or rather did it seem, that in the air
Angelic forms descending from on high,
Did on their wings unearthly odours bear;—
So deemed the Knight with rising ecstacy;
For now magnificent beyond compare
Were the wild features of the scenery,
As morn's advancing glories 'gan unfold
The Autumn's yellow fields and woods of glittering gold.

91.

But slowly on his watchful sight arose
The varied beauties of the sylvan reign.
First the sweet fragrance lulled him to repose,
He felt no more the fiery throbs of pain;
Then a faint lambent flame within him glows,

A gleam of youthful joy revived again—
Hope shed upon the grass a roseate light,
And dim illusions floated o'er his sight.

92.

Then Memory woke, and slowly on his ear
Fell the sweet notes of music loved of yore;
That mighty Bards first woke in accents clear,
And o'er all nations endless echoes bore,—
Immortal strains 'twas ecstacy to hear
Of power long lost enchantment to restore:
Aye, Memory woke those lofty strains, and threw
O'er all the rural scenes divine enchantment new.

93.

Fragment.

O Heaven ! what lovely tints around me play !
The sweet enchantments of Autumnal morn !
What nameless bliss assumes unwonted sway !
What soothing dreams are on my fancy borne !
Enchantress Hope, awake !—with heavenly ray
Again illume my pilgrimage forlorn !
Memory, awake ! thy choicest stores unfold,
And renovate the joys that charmed my path of old.

94.

Again the glories of the noonday light
Are spread abroad, and all the scenes are gay,
And Fancy revels in creations bright
As through the shady woodland walks I stray,

The while the distant landscape charms my sight
With richest hues that autumn can display—
There purple hills and fields of floating gold
Are to my watchful sight alternately unrolled.

* * * * * *

95.

The influences of that autumnal morn
Woke every finer sense, and heavenly rays
Were shed upon the wilderness forlorn,
And wild Imagination's kindling blaze
Did all the woods with matchless light adorn,
And without effort flowed the impassioned lays—
Are ecstacies like these deceitful? No!—
These are the purest, best, e'er given to man below.

96.

When the same nerves and frame that but at morn
Were bathed in Rapture's most delicious trance,
The screws reversed, are agonized and torn;
And Intellect, whose animating glance
Did all the scenes with matchless tints adorn,
Is quenched and cold and dark; what hope or chance
Remains to quell the demons dire that wait,
Grinding their fangs, the Ministers of Fate?

97.

'Tis but a passing cloud—a little while,
And the bright sun will beam abroad again,
And the fair prospects in their glory smile,
And Fancy, with reanimating reign,

With new delights my lonely path beguile,
And burst the bonds that now my soul enchain;
O then what rapture in my heart will rise,
Even at the simplest sight that greets my watchful eyes!

98.

So whispers Hope;—but, oh! the mournful void,
The direful sway of anguish and despair;
Remorse for hours unworthily employed
(Reckless of Nature's lovely scenery fair,
Prime treasury of pleasures unalloyed,)
And thousand nameless fiends my vitals tear.—
Oh! when shall Morning on my path diffuse
Again her lovely light, and soul-enchanting hues?

99.

The sweet creations of poetic hours,—
Where are they now? Remembrance only throws
A semblance faint, as in November's bowers,
When the south-wind with balmy influence blows,
Or when the winds are hushed, and deeply lowers
The heavy sky, the fading leaves disclose
A faint perfume to him who strays alone
Through the wild forest walks with matted leaves bestrown.

100.

Independence.

And through the live-long night I heard the rain,
And driving night-winds through the forest blow,
And o'er my soul a melancholy train
Of visionary fears their clouds did throw:
But when fair morning cheered the scenes again,
O then fast fled the sable trains of woe!
I marked a rosy light around me shine
And knew the presence of a guest divine.

101.

Dark, dark and lowering were the clouds, but still
A radiance emanated from the sky,
That gave a magic hue to dale and hill,
With Autumn's yellow leaves in harmony.

A holy calm my watchful mind did fill—
Anon my heart was roused to ecstacy,
For Hope's enchanting form before me stood,
And pointed to the path that wound amid the wood.

102.

The cool fresh odours of the copsewood gay
Did all around a healing balm diffuse,
And cheerful I pursued the winding way,
Deep hung with silvery robe of chilling dews,—
Till on my view Helvellyn's forehead gray
Arose adorned by morn's advancing hues,
And 'mid the wilderness a temple shone,
Whose wonders till that hour were all to me unknown.

103.

Here INDEPENDENCE reigned;—her palace high
Stood on a rock sublime; and all around
Were magic scenes of wild variety.
And when the arduous pathway I had wound,
And the proud portals did asunder fly,
Oh! then the fulness of enjoyment crowned
My ravished sense; for many a happy sight
Was to the view displayed amid that region bright.

104.

Here one immortal Poet musing strayed;
His mind was his own kingdom; nor the pride
Nor pomp of courts could lure him from the shade,
Wherein his mighty soul soared far and wide

To scenes remote in fairy tints arrayed,
And every sight and sound did him provide
Sweet solace, when the wind blew high or low,
Or poured October's rain, or fell December's snow.

105.

Oft times he stood, and listened to the gale,
That through the hollow caverns moaning past;
And looked upon the fading foliage pale,
That the night-winds had on his pathway cast;
And when the tempest raved along the vale,
He loved to hear the roarings of the blast,
That more enchanting music could supply,
Than all the powers of artful minstrelsy.

106.

Reckless alike was he of blame or praise;
That could not elevate; nor this depress;
For his own pastime he attuned his lays,
Ne cared for their failure or success.
All doubts and fears were lost amid the blaze
Of light that did each meaner thought repress,—
That inward light, that bears aloft the soul
To realms where other worlds in boundless ocean roll.

107.

Fragment.

Amid the mists of a November morn,

Methought I marked a castle proud arise,

Whose mouldering ivied walls with age were worn :—

My heart was roused to kindling ecstacies;

For ne'er till then did scene so wild, forlorn,

Such grandeur in decay delight mine eyes—

Each battlement I marked, and nodding tower,

And window erst so gay in Beauty's radiant bower.

108.

Then did I mark beneath a portal grey

The castle's woful owner pensive stand;

It seemed to meet the Morn's first rising ray,

And breathe her first reviving influence bland

Thither deep musing he had bent his way;
But wizard Indolence, with magic wand,
Had lulled to rest each nerve; and waking sleep
Did in perpetual dreams his drowsy senses steep.

109.

But, oh, his visage!! not a trace was there
Of aught that should to living man pertain;
An early victim he of ceaseless care,
That preyed upon his cheek and parched his brain;
And, Fortitude, alas! to dire despair,
Though lingering long, resigned her heavenly reign.
Yet in his eye a lambent light arose,
As radiant Morn advanced her glories to disclose.

110.

Then, as in splendour onwards moved the day,
Wild mountains shewed their rugged cliffs o'ergrown
With wildwood, where, yet lovely in decay,
In dewy light the yellow foliage shone;
Then, as the silvery mist-wreaths rolled away,
A sunbeam on the glassy lake was thrown,
And at the sight the redbreast woke his lay,
And forth advanced the wanderer on his way.

111.

Then changed the scene into a garden fair—
Fair, though beneath November's mournful sway:
For oaks and hardier orchard trees were there,
Whose varied hues long lingered on the spray;

And proudly too the pine-tree, never bare,
And yew fantastic, rose in trim array;
Then marked I where the Melancholy Knight
Slow stalking did admire that region of delight.

112.

And as along the velvet walks he strayed,
With leaves bestrown, deep drenched in balmy dews,
Faultering in melancholy tones he said,
" How glorious are the fading forest's hues!
How exquisite the odours of the shade,
That o'er my languid frame their balm diffuse.
O man unwise, those heavenly charms to slight,
In crowded scenes to grasp at base impure delight!

113.

" Aye, heavenly are the charms that round me reign—
It is not from the scene that fills mine eyes
Alone, nor from the sylvan songster's strain,
That gleams of hope and confidence arise;
A mightier power this wondrous earth sustains;
A secret balm, descending from the skies,
Robes the wild groves, and wakes the songster's voice,
And bids the wise and good, and pure in heart, rejoice."

114.

Fragment.

Bright beams the sun; the western breezes blow;
The scenes are mellowed by transparent haze;
And Nature reassumes the temperate glow,
That Autumn in her last, last smile displays—
Ere Winter's blasts awake, and driving snow,
And not a leaf the dark oak tree arrays.
Oh scenes of inexhaustible delight,
Guiltless!—Oh might I prize your magic charms aright!

115.

But Indolence has dulled each nerve, and weighs
On every sense; and, wrapt in waking sleep
And ceaseless reverie, I waste my days,
And of the swift-winged hours no reckoning keep;

And but in thought I roam the woodland maze,
And night and day I hear the breezes sweep
Round my lone chamber, save when trance profound,
And slumber's heavy spells, my senses all have bound.

116.

A charm there is in Winter's awful reign
Best known to bosoms not untouched by woe;
A charm that more inspires the poet's strain,
Than all the joys that summer can bestow;
Dear are the driving winds and chilling rain,
And dear the withered heaps that rest below
The parent boughs, on which erewhile so gay
They shone beneath the Autumn's magic ray.

117.

Prince Ipommydon.

No joy had he in aught that passed around,
Nor song nor dance his languid soul could sway;
Lonely he sought the forest's utmost bound;
Lonely he spent the night, lonely the day:
But, when the twilight ray with purple crowned
The mountain's steep, he watched the slow decay;
It seemed as if he drank the lovely light,
That filled his fancy with creations bright.

118.

Whence is it that he shuns the festive bower,
Where melting dames are met in bright array
To charm with converse sweet the fleeting hour?—
Whence is it that he loves alone to stray

When the wild light of Even's uncertain shower
Slowly declines upon the mountain gray?
Oh, listen, lordings, to my feeble strain,
Whilst I the sources of his woes explain!

* * * * * * * *

119.

'Twas a sweet sylvan scene, where never voice
Of Bacchanalian rout, or step profane,
Nor soul untouched by pure poetic joys,
Had marred of lonely bliss the tranquil reign—
For Nature here did in herself rejoice,
And, fearless, woke the thrush his earliest strain,
And many a tree, in amorous junction twined,
Sheltered that faëry glade from every ruder wind.

120.

It chanced amid that lonely scene THE CHILDE
His way had bent the tangled woods among,
What time the sun his dying radiance wild
Diffused the peaceful plains and glades along;
His soul was wrapt in meditations mild,
What-while he listened to the cheering song
That early thrush and woodlark poured amain,
To hail the tranquil charms of Evening's lovely reign.

121.

As on amid the tangled wood he strayed,
A radiance rising in the western sky
Had all the groves in purple tints arrayed—
But, oh! for some seraphic minstrelsy

To paint the form that, floating through the shade,
Rose like a sunbeam to his watchful eye!
In vain are all the powers of earthly lay,
That form of melting grace and beauty to display.

122.

If thou hast ever loved in solitude
To thread the mazes of the woodland wild;
If thou hast loved along the rocky wood,
To watch the dying tints of radiance mild;
If thou with genuine fervour hast pursued
These joys from city tumults far exiled,
Then thou may'st picture to thyself a sight,
What I may not pourtray, in breathing colours bright.

123.

That angel form that rose so suddenly
Faded as fast; she came and she is gone,
Like the wild splendour of the morning sky,
On some fantastic cliff of vapour thrown!
And, wrapt in trance of breathless ecstacy,
The Youth is left amid the woods alone.
But never from that hour could earthly dame,
Or knightly sport, for him the wonted solace frame.

124.

His days were spent in meditations deep
On her whom he, alas! might meet no more;
And Hope would with wild visions haunt his sleep,
(His waking sleep) and all his bliss restore;

And when the morn with purple crowned the steep,
Her rosy wings his wayward fancy bore
To heights to all unknown; and all around
Half deemed that madness dire his senses did confound.

125.

In sooth it might of him be rightly said,
He did not live, but dreamed his time away;
The demon of perpetual thought had made
The hapless Youth her unresisting prey;
And, or in bower, or in the greenwood shade,
Alike was his companion night and day,
Till his sunk hollow eyes, abstracted air,
Did all the woes of hopeless love declare.

126.

Vain was the song, the dance; alone he seemed
Even in the midst of multitudes;—in vain
Did ladies cast their smiles, that all had deemed
Celestial, who were numbered in their train;
In vain enlivening tapers brightly gleamed,
And minstrels raised on high the jocund strain:
In waking sleep he moved; all outward things
Were profitless and void,—fantastic shadowings.

127.

One only maiden bright there was who knew
His soul to charm; a slow and plaintive strain
From voice and harp with trembling touch she drew,—
And yet, alas! her knowledge was in vain;

For when the strain was done, away he flew !—
The song, but not the songstress, could obtain
His cold regard ; and, still, the forest through
His lonely way he bent, his visions to renew.

128.

How sweet the obscurities of early morn,
While yet, in sleep, all nature seems to lie,
Save, from amid the misty copsewood borne,
Rise wandering witch-notes of wild minstrelsy !—
'Twas that sweet early hour—the white hawthorn
Gave odours sweet as gales of Araby ;
For May's luxuriant reign in hill and dale
Loaded with sweets ambrosial every gale.

129.

A vision rose; and thus the Youth addrest:

" In dreams no longer wear thy life away;

The peerless maid whose image fires thy breast,

The sceptre of a distant land doth sway:—

Befits it then in dull inglorious rest

And empty visions thus, from day to day,

Thy time to waste, nor strive in Glory's plain

One honourable wreath of laurel to obtain?

130.

" Lo! now the radiance of the morning sky

Illumes with rosy light the dewy plain;

And, hark! the thrush awakes his melody,

Emprising thus his amorous suit to gain—

Listen! Oh mark his thrilling minstrelsy—
How full, how sweet, how passionate the strain!
And is it meet for thee no lay to wake,
No service to endure for thy sweet Empress' sake?

131.

"Shall not the breezy incense-breathing air
Thy soul awake, and bid thy frame expand
With resolutions proud to spurn despair,
And prove thy puissance at my command?
Lo! I am with thee still; my guardian care
Shall guide thee in thy course from land to land.
Sufferings thou may'st endure, and dangers dire,
But purer shall come forth from sorrow's searching fire."

* * * * * * *

132.

Realms of enchantment, where the Youth pursued
His venturous way,—whilom full well I knew
The loveliest scenery of your solitude,
And from your charms sweet inspiration drew;
And careless wove the flowers in sportive mood,
That round my path in gay luxuriance grew;
But, ah! the days, so sweet, but give the sting
Of bitter contrast now, to hopeless sorrowing.

POEMS.

POEMS.

TO

SIR S. E. BRYDGES, K. J. M. P.

ON READING

"HASTY LINES," &c.

1.

THERE are, alas! who view this "living scene,"
Yon heaven of azure and this earth of green,
And all the charms of grove or haunted dell,
Yet feel no rising throbs of rapture swell;
There are, who view the kindling glow of morn
With purple fringe the distant hills adorn;

There are, who mark the fading light of even,
And hear the wood-notes on the breezes driven;
Yet to their grovelling souls no sweets are known,
Save the dull sway of sensual joys alone.

2.

What are the richest charms of Nature's store,
" The warbling woodland, the resounding shore,"
Till brightened by the matchless light of mind,
" Pure, and by" heaven-directed " toils refined ?"—
Nought but a treasure open to the eye,
But locked from use by demon Apathy !

3.

But lays there are, of soul-exalting power
To weave enchantments in the simplest bower ;

Resistless lays that twine about the heart,

And bid each mean emotion thence depart;

Duty to passion turn; exalt each joy;

Sooth every grief; each base-born care destroy;

Mid winter's storms bid brightest sunshine glow,

Through desert wilds bid streams of gladness flow!

Such heavenly power resides in verse divine,

O Bard of Wootton! and such lays are thine!

ON READING

THE LADY OF THE LAKE,

MAY 12, 1810.

1.

Sweet are the twilight's amber rays
That on the northern mountain die;
And sweet the blackbird's soothing lays
That hail those fading tints on high—
But sweeter far his ardent strain
Who wakes the "mountain harp again,"
And pours in varied course along
The tide of high romantic song.

2.

Though dear the pensive dreams that fill
My heart, when at the close of day
I watch along the northern hill
Fair Twilight's last departing ray,—
I feel with more supreme delight
That when to them I bid good night,
When Time has spoiled this forest gay,
When ages shall have passed away,
His song shall triumph o'er decay.

3.

How many a bard will on thy page,
O Scott, the raptured tear bestow!
How many a lovelorn heart assuage
Its own, in tracing others' woe,

How many a lonely hour be cheered,

How many a faëry vision reared,

When *ages shall have passed away,*

And base detraction met decay!

FRAGMENT,

WRITTEN IN GLENFINLAS.*

1.

That restless fire was in my breast
Which haunts my path in solitude,
Up the grey mountain's side I prest
To seek the cavern's shelter rude:
I twined the heath-bell's lingering flowers;
The light which cheers my lonely hours
Was glowing mid the autumnal wood,
And charm'd the path of solitude.

* First published in the Edinburgh Annual Register for 1809.

2.

The mountain air was calm and pure,
No sound was through the forest borne,
Save from afar, on Lowland moor,
When rose the voice of hound and horn.
Through scenes remote and wild I stray'd,
O'er rocky steep and haunted glade;
And when the autumnal day was done
I rested on a mossy stone.

3.

Through broken cliffs and woods afar
Was seen the twilight's radiance bright;
And, dear to lovers' eyes, the star
Of Eve disclosed her silvery light.

It was a sad and soothing scene ;

A train of cherished thoughts serene,

Offspring of Fancy, sweetly stole

With magic influence on my soul.

4.

No murmur broke the rising dream

That floated on my ravish'd sight,

Save when the roar of mountain stream

Loaded the balmy breeze of night ;

Or when the leaves, that yet exhale

A dying fragrance in the gale,

Borne by the zephyr from on high,

Fell rustling on my closed eye.

* * * * *

5.

Methought that while I gazed on high,
And watch'd declining tints afar,
A form seem'd issuing from the sky
More bright than Eve's refulgent star.
I traced its flight o'er Ben Venue ;—
More near the glorious vision drew,
Till, beaming through the tangled wood,
That heavenly shape before me stood.

6.

The seraph bore a female form ;
Light robes of tartan round her flew ;
An airy harp hung on her arm,
Intwined with flowers of various hue.

A dazzling glory round her shone ;

She pointed to the mountains lone,

Where grey Glenfinlas lies, o'erhung

By rocks in wild disorder flung.

7.

" These are the realms," she said, " where long

Have I, with guardian care, survey'd

The scenes that *once* awoke the song

Of bards divine that hither stray'd :

The Genius of that land am I,

Where every pine-clad steep on high,

Each lonely sheal or ruin grey,

Or even the trembling of a spray,

Recalls the marvellous deeds of yore,

And legends of mysterious lore.

8.

" There is not in yon valley wide
A cliff that hoary lichens bind;
Scarce in the wild a spot descried,
With which a tale is not intwined,
That might with lofty strains inspire
Each master of the heavenly lyre,
And still unfading bloom display,
Till woods and rocks themselves decay.

9.

" There, mid the shaggy solitude,
The voice of a diviner age
Exalts the soul to holy mood,
Or wakes to sympathetic rage.

Those martial strains are heard again,

That ne'er to battle call'd in vain,

And ghosts of former heroes glide,

Grim beckoning from the mountain side.

10.

" But soon the withering grasp of Time,

Who moves with silent viewless flight,

Shall doom those beauteous themes sublime

Unsung to never-ending night.

Their glories, like the leaves which now

Chill frosts are stealing from the bough,

Unaided by the poet's lyre,

In dark oblivion shall expire.

11.

" O seize their beauties ere they die,
While yet the pastoral life remains;
My willing aid shall still be nigh,
To prompt for thee the impassion'd strains:
Even yet the hoary seer can tell
The fortunes strange that here befell
Full many a mighty chief of old
In legendary fame inrolled:
O listen, ere their charms are fled,
And mix'd for ever with the dead!"

12.

I woke; the lovely dream was gone;
Yet on the balmy gale of even

Celestial melodies were thrown,

And now retreating rose to Heaven.

Each object in the woodland range

By moonlight seem'd more wild and strange:

The lengthening vale below was lost

In shadowy mist and dazzling frost;

The silvery beams with glittering play

Danced on the waves of Loch Achray;

And as I hail'd the charms of night,

Mine inward gleams were passing bright.

ELEGY.*

With what delight, mid yonder shades serene,
I hear the thrilling minstrelsy of Heaven!
To me, how soothing is yon kindred scene!
To me how balmy this cool breath of even!

In former years, mid these same shades remote,
At the same hour, and self-same season sweet,
Oft have I thus the peaceful woodlands sought,
To muse, sequestered, in the calm retreat.

* First published in the Edinburgh Annual Register.

Then, boundless charms, bright as the youthful year,
In swift succession, ever-varying rose;
While Hope's enchanting form was ever near,
To sooth my light and transitory woes.

O youthful joys, how quickly do ye pass,
And like the morning cloud ye fade away;
Or like the dew-drops, trembling on the grass,
That fly the glances of advancing day!

I seek not *now* yon kindred shades serene,
To meet those pleasures that illumed *the past;*
Fled is the pleasing, gay, delusive scene:
Those dreams, alas! were too, too sweet to last.

I wander mournful through the well-known shade;
The weak line drops unfinished from my tongue!—
But still I love the splendours here displayed,
And yet enjoy the woodlark's evening song.

Perchance, when at the high behest of Heaven
My soul is called to unknown realms afar,
Death may draw near, like the deep shades of Even,
And meet me thus beneath her dewy star.

Then, be it mine to sink, unseen, alone,
Without one friend to heave the pitying sigh,
In some dark grove, deserted and unknown,
While the loved woodlark sings a requiem nigh.

I.

You ask why on my lips the smile
Seems forced, and ever fades away;
You ask why in my eyes the while
No gleam of gladness seems to play;
You ask why in my hollow cheek
No hues of youthful transport glow,
But hectic fires my visage streak,
Or yield to pallid tints of woe.—
I dare not tell—the woes that spring
Unceasing in my wasted frame
Still deepening gloom around me fling,
And bar the radiant gates of Fame.

You bid me tune my lyre to themes
Of mirth and gladness as of yore,
And renovate the fäëry dreams
That might my peace of mind restore.
But when did roses in the wild
Of sea-beat rocks uncultured blow?
Or when did zephyrs soft and mild
Arise from fields of polar snow?
For me there is no joy—the ray
Of Hope has long been sunk in gloom;
The magic hues have died away
That wont around my path to bloom.

II.

Thou know'st not what it is to frame
Illusions bright as those that rise,

When o'er the ocean waves of flame

The sun sinks in the western skies;

Thou know'st not what it is to stray

Through fields in magical array,

Such as for poets only bloom—

Therefore thou canst not know the gloom—

The cureless anguish of the heart

When these wild raptures all depart,

When all is desolate and cold,

And nought appears on wood and wold

But solitude, and pain, and woe;

These miseries thou canst never know.

* * * * * * *

III.

Aye! there is on my soul a weight
Of woe that fain would have relief,
And fain would I to thee relate
The sources of my secret grief.
It may not be—the tale would bring
Of self-reproach the keener sting—
Suffice it but so much to tell,
'Twas not by my own guilt I fell!
The hopes that lingered in my breast
Were such as thou would'st deem the best!
I saw the radiant forms arise,
I heard celestial harmonies;
At distance far a lovely land
I marked in glorious hues expand;
But nearer dared not—could not go—
Most true, though strange, my tale of woe!

Oct. 26.

How deep the calm of this autumnal day!

Scarce 'mid the leaves the whispering breezes play;

Though frequent on my path the leaves that fall

Remembrance of the fading year recall;

How soon the wildwood's glories will be past!

With every breath the foliage fades how fast!

And shall those lovely hues all meet decay

Without the homage of one grateful lay?—

Frail as the gossamer that in the sun

This moment shines, and is the next undone,

Are the wild visions of the bard, and fast

They wither like the leaves before the blast;

And not a trace remains, but dark and chill,
Life's dread realities the prospect fill.

Remove the heavenward energies of MIND,
And level with the brutes are all mankind!
Who feel no kindling ecstacies arise
From the fair scenery that around them lies.—
How lonely then the poet's lot below,
Where so, so few the charms of Virtue know!
So few the right prefer, and shun the wrong;
So few can taste the moral charms of song!—
But he to lone and trackless woods retires,
Where angels lull his grief with heavenly lyres;
And PATIENCE, HOPE, and FORTITUDE attend;
And VIRTUE forms his Guardian and his Friend.—

Though loftier souls may soar to loftier state,

"THEY ALSO SERVE WHO ONLY STAND AND WAIT!"*

And oft from distant woods a voice will rise

In accents grateful to the Good and Wise,

To tell the joys that in retirement reign,

Where none who rightly sought e'er sought in vain

The balm which Heaven imparts those wounds to heal,

Which souls refined, in earthly mansions, feel.

* ——————"God doth not need
Either man's work or his own gifts; who best
Bear his mild yoke they serve him best; his state
Is kingly; thousands at his bidding speed,
And post o'er land and ocean without rest;
They also serve who only stand and wait."

MILTON.

SONNET I.

Genius of leaves and flowers, that to the gale
Thy cooling sweets impart'st, O give to me
Thy balmy solace; I have need of thee
To sooth the feverish throbbings that assail
My worn-out frame: for many a spectre pale
Haunts my lone path and leads to misery;
And O how rarely from their influence free
Have mine hours glided in life's tearful vale?—
Yet not the less has my heart swelled to hear
Thy heavenly lays, where every virtue glows,
And brightest hues of Intellect appear,
And the full tide of inspiration flows,
Brydges admired! whose glory never sere
Its bloom to countless ages shall disclose!

SONNET II.

ON THE RUINS OF KINCARDINE CASTLE.

Ye mouldering heaps and time-worn fragments gray
How gladly would the admiring mind restore
Your vanished forms and grandeur now no more,
When barons, knights, and dames in proud array
'Mid these deserted scenes oft bent their way,
And rung thy roofs to minstrel tales of yore,
Whose tones to distant plains the breezes bore,
When Scotland's kings might here the sceptre sway!
For lovely is the landscape all around,
While now the autumn's yellow gleams unfold
Far distant prospects of enchanted ground,
Lakes, woods, and mountains, fields of waving gold;
And Fancy bids her richest stores abound,
And memory wakes again the deeds of old!

SONNET III.

ON RURAL SCENERY.

THOUGH in my feeble frame no transports glow,
And in my mind no visions wild arise,
Yet while the radiance of autumnal skies
Beams on the scene, a holy calm I know,
And dim illusions on my fancy flow!
Tranquil I mark the redbreast's harmonies,
And with faint rapture trace the varying dies
That o'er the woods their livelier influence throw.
O wherefore, when autumnal charms abound,
Should low-born cares e'er cloud the landscape gay?—
Enchantress HOPE, awake! and shed around
The matchless light thou only canst display!
Then shall I travel on enchanted ground,
And Grief's pale clouds dissolving fade away!

SONNET IV.

ON VISITING THE RUINED CASTLE OF FINELLA, COUNTESS OF ANGUS.*

When on the melancholy heath no ray
Of autumn beams, but the once lovely sky,
Big with portentous gloom, lours heavily,
Mid these wild scenes how sweet to waste the day,
Soothed by reviving Fancy's magic sway!
While many a mystic train, to charm the eye,
Of forms from death recall'd comes floating by,
And all around obscure illusions play!
There tones aërial meet the charmed ear
Of the long-silent hunter's cheering horn;

* Who contrived the assassination of Kenneth II. in revenge for that king's murder of her son at Scone.

Departed chiefs and glittering dames appear,
And bold FINELLA decks the scenes forlorn;
Wild voices shout revenge! in accents clear,
And clanging war-notes in the blast are borne.

FRAGMENT.

Like the pale maniac, on whose wildered brain
The light of joy and reason breaks anew,
Who hears Affection's voice, and breathes again
Spring's balmy gale, wafted the forest through,

Each flower beloved in youth I fondly greet;
Drink the fresh spirit of the yellow broom;
The hoary hawthorn's rising fragrance meet,
And watch the gleams of morn the groves illume.

—Here shall I tread again the flowery maze,
And eager hail the wonders of Romance;
Perchance, ere yet the twilight of my days,
On me the Muse may cast a favouring glance.*

I would not, like those early blossoms, fade,
That now, alas! on yonder bough expire;
Or, like the "daffodils," recline the head,
Nor leave one living record of the lyre.†

* *Fuit φαντασμα!*

† "Fair daffodils! we weep to see
You haste away so soon," &c.—*Herrick.*

THE END.

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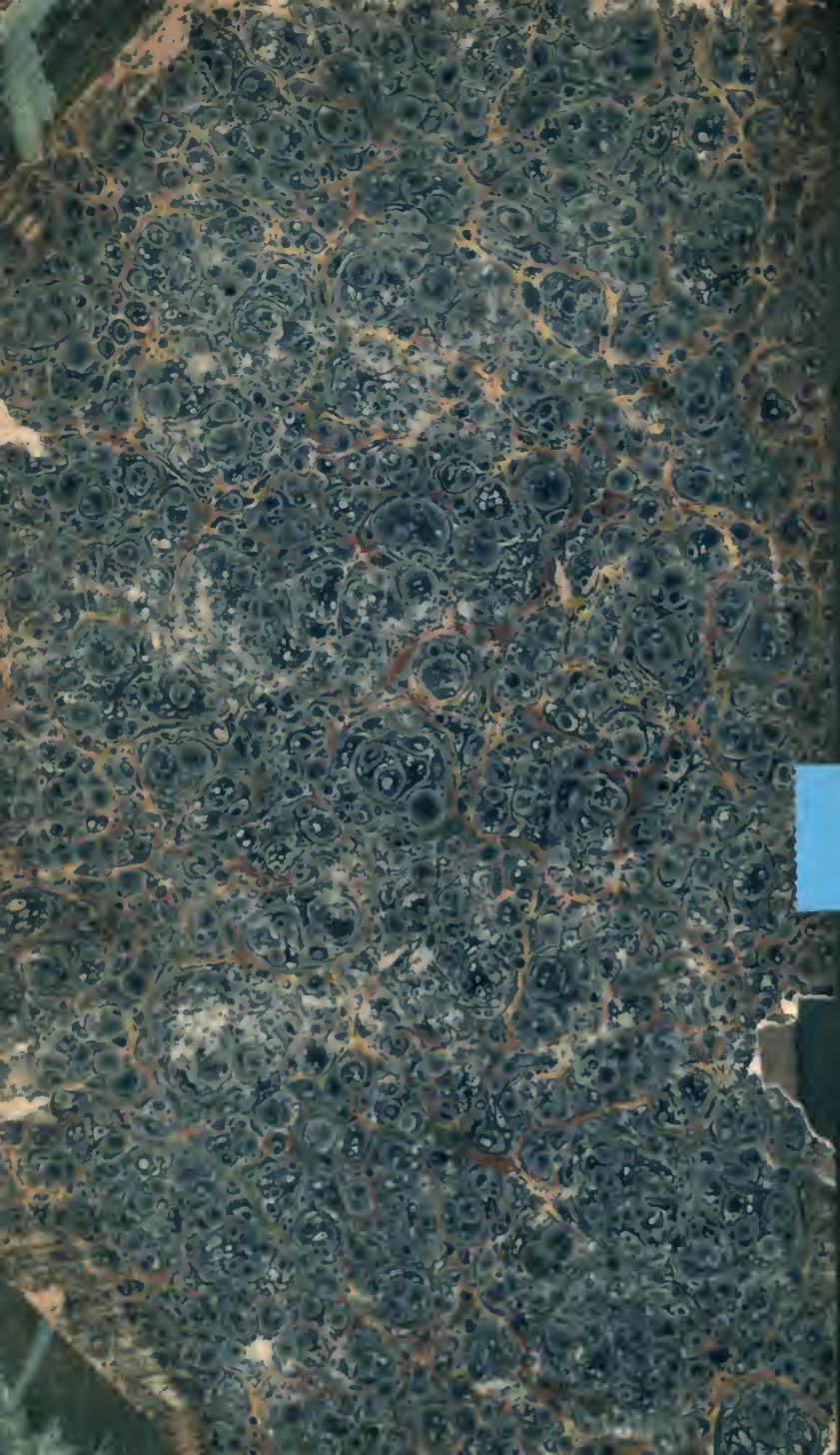
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